

CLASSIC POP PRESENTS

MICHAEL JACKSON

SPECIAL EDITION



132-PAGE **COLLECTOR'S ISSUE**

THE KING OF POP THROUGH THE DECADES... AN ICON AND HIS MUSIC

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CLASSIC POP
PRESENTS

M. JACKSON
PRICE £6.99



MJ WELCOME

ONE THING I'VE NOTICED, IS THAT WE'VE ALL BEEN INFLUENCED BY MICHAEL JACKSON... EVEN IF WE DON'T REALISE IT. I HAVE A FEELING EVERYONE WHO WILL READ THIS VERY SPECIAL EDITION OF CLASSIC POP WOULD HAVE, AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, ATTEMPTED TO MOONWALK.

WE'LL ALL HAVE A VERY FIRM OPINION ON THE MERITS OR OTHERWISE OF *THE GIRL IS MINE* (FOR THE RECORD, I WILL FIGHT THE CORNER FOR THE MUSICALITY OF ANY AND ALL MICHAEL/MCCARTNEY COLLABORATIONS.) WE'VE ALL BEEN INFLUENCED, WHETHER WE MAKE POP VIDEOS OR WATCH THEM, BY *THRILLER*. BUT WHO WERE MICHAEL JACKSON'S INFLUENCES?

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As we set out to celebrate every facet of an absorbing and prolific life in pop, I wanted to take a step back and pay tribute to the artists that inspired an icon. "I always wanted to do music that influences and inspires each generation," Jackson once said, adding ominously, "Let's face it, who wants mortality?"

Of course, there was James Brown: "When I saw him move I was mesmerised," he explained. "Right then and there I knew that that was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life." But Michael was about more than that. It was, as we know now, all an act. He created personas for every song, album and video, and took inspiration from acting legends as much as musicians.

"If you could work with anyone, alive or dead, who would that be?" *Gold* magazine asked him in 2002. "Charlie Chaplin, who I love so much," he replied. "Also, Laurence Olivier was a genius. Those two... and also the king, Brando." There's a great blog by Annemarie Latour that looks at how Jackson's and Chaplin's life stories overlap. In *Tramping*



With Chaplin she points out how childhood sorrow and pain was a spark of inspiration for clowning, acting and performing for both. Michael touched on this in 2001, telling *USA Today*: "We'd make up songs as we worked... that's what makes greatness. You have to have that tragedy, that pain to pull from. That's what makes a clown great. You can see he's hurting behind the masquerade... Chaplin did that so beautifully, better than anyone. I can play off those moments, too. I've been through the fire many times."

On a lighter note, Fred Astaire inspired Michael's sense of cabaret and on-stage joie de vivre. The pair's love for each other is well-documented; Michael dedicated his *Moonwalk* bio to Astaire. And before he departed this plane in 1987, Astaire said "I didn't want to leave without knowing who my descendant was... Thank you, Michael."

Ian Peel Founder and Editor-at-Large

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Steve Harnell is the Editor of *Classic Pop* and *Vintage Rock* magazines and has been writing

about music for almost two decades, covering all manner of genres from soul, pop, indie and R&B to rock, Americana and hip-hop.



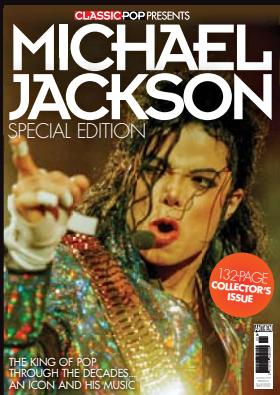
Mark Lindores grew up during the golden age of pop mags, devouring *Smash Hits* and *Number One*. Writing about the artists he used to read about for *Classic Pop*, *Total Film* and *Mixmag*, he is living the dream of his 15-year-old self.



Paul Lester has been both Features Editor of *Melody Maker* and Deputy Editor of *Uncut*. Since 2007 he has freelanced for *The Guardian*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Independent*, *MOJO*, *Classic Rock* and *Classic Pop*.



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ANTHEM PUBLISHING

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Paul Lester chronicles The Jackson 5's rise to fame from neighbourhood entertainers via the chitlin' circuit to Motown Records and breakthrough single *I Want You Back*

1970S: EASY AS 1-2-3

Paul Lester investigates the decade when Jackson evolved from a child prodigy to a fully-fledged solo superstar with an epochal debut album, *Off The Wall*

EARLY 1980S: WANNA BE

STARTIN' SOMETHIN'

Mark Lindores pays homage to Jackson's record-breaking masterpiece *Thriller*, the album that broke down racial barriers – and which had a seismic effect on its creator

LATE 1980S: WHO'S BAD

Mark Lindores charts how Jackson rallied his strength for the hotly-anticipated follow up, the brilliant *Bad*, and discovers how the King Of Pop kept his cool in a pop landscape where others vied for the crown

1990S: I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES

Paul Lester reveals how Jackson managed to up the ante in a decade that brought further notoriety, even more ambitious videos and yet another game-changing album

2000S: TROUBLE IN PARADISE

Steve Harnell looks at how the curtain closed on a tumultuous decade that saw Jackson hounded by a headline-hungry media, damaging accusations and courtroom drama, and the epic comeback that never happened



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PAUL McCARTNEY

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FREDDIE MERCURY

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Jackson's music and dancing was most certainly revolutionary, but so too were his incredible videos. Mark Lindores explains

how MJ took a brand new medium and rapidly raised the bar

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John Earls opens Jackson's wardrobe doors to reveal a look that evolved from bell bottoms and tank tops under the watchful eye of his father to iconic garments and some truly revolutionary stage-wear

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Michael Jackson gave very few interviews in his life, particularly once he'd got the measure of those journalists who put headlines over facts. Here, we discover what he really thought about the world and his place in it

CLASSIC POP MOMENT

The King and Queen of Pop and a very exclusive after party...

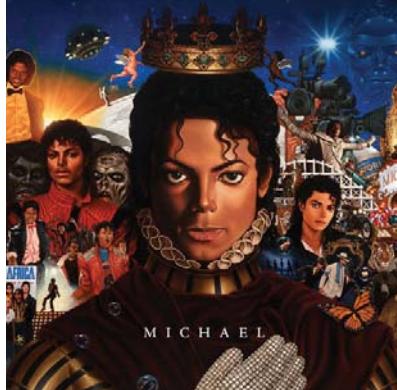
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THE KING OF POP

FROM INDIANA TO THE WORLD,
FROM HIS FIRST RECORDS TO HIS
LAST, WE TRACE THE PATH OF THE
IRREPLACEABLE MICHAEL JACKSON





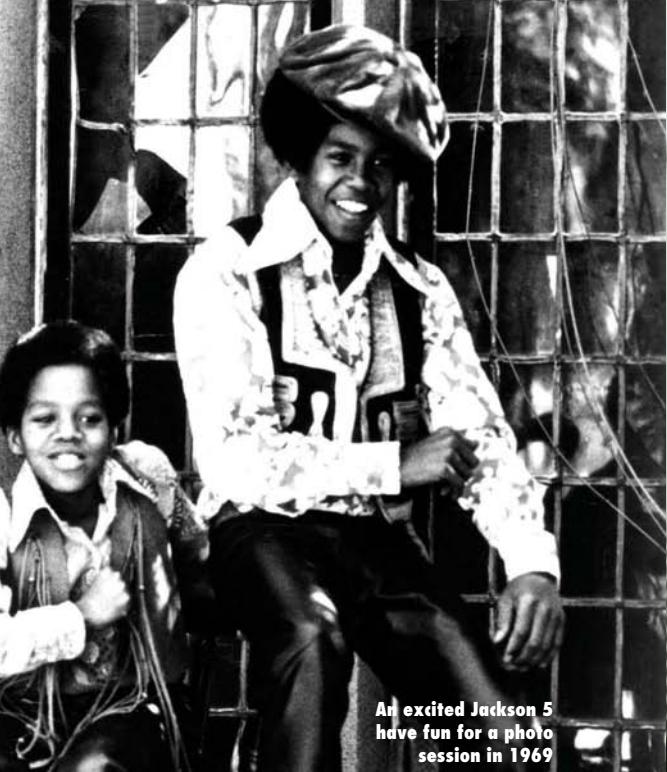
1960s

Five Alive

WITH *I WANT YOU BACK*, THE JACKSON 5 LIT THE SPARK FOR THE SEVENTIES SOUL EXPLOSION. HOW DID THEY BECOME THE BIGGEST BOY BAND EVER – AND HOW DID A 10-YEAR-OLD BECOME THEIR LEADER?

PAUL LESTER





An excited Jackson 5 have fun for a photo session in 1969

The

Jacksons only released one single proper and one album – *I Want You Back* and *Diana Ross Presents The Jackson 5* – in the '60s, right at the tail-end of the decade, in, respectively, October and December 1969. And yet

the music in question was explosive enough to make you want to trace all the way back, to discover the source of the big bang.

In the beginning, The Jackson 5 were known as The Jackson Brothers, and there were just four of them: Sigmund "Jackie" Jackson, the eldest, who was born in 1951; Toriano "Tito" Jackson, born in 1953; Jermaine Jackson, born in 1954; and Marlon Jackson, born in 1957. The boys – from a working-class neighbourhood in Gary, Indiana – began performing together in 1963, apparently compelled

to do so at a cellular level. Their father, Joseph, may have been a stern disciplinarian – beatings for misbehaviour were a frequent occurrence – and

their mother Katherine a devout Jehovah's Witness, but despite leisure pursuits being few and far between at the Jacksons' house at 2300 Jackson Street, they were encouraged to pursue an interest in music.

It was their mother who would teach the boys to sing as she warbled her way through tunes such as *Cotton Fields*, *She'll Be Coming 'Round The Mountain* and *Wabash Cannonball*. "The first time I heard my mother really cut loose on a country song, I was impressed," recalled Jackie. "'Gosh, she can really sing,' I thought. That's how it all started for my brother and me – harmonising behind her." It probably didn't hurt that Joe, a crane operator for a steel company, had once been in a group with his brother Luther, an R&B outfit called The Falcons (not the band of the same name that launched Wilson Pickett's career). This, as far as Joe Jackson saw it, was his chance at last to achieve fame by proxy.

POP UP The Jackson 5 may never have existed had the family's TV not broken down in 1955. Forced to generate entertainment, their mother began recalling songs, and singalongs soon became a Jackson tradition



Typically for the Jackson household, music was intertwined with mischief. One night, Jackie, Tito and Jermaine found their father's beloved old guitar, which he kept in a case in the hallway closet, and began using it to play along with songs from the radio. When Joe got home from work and caught Tito holding the guitar with a broken string, he was incensed. But his anger soon turned to delight when he saw how well his son could handle the instrument.

"Boy, you can play," he declared.

He also realised that his three eldest sons, Tito, Jermaine and Jackie were more than capable of holding a note (Marlon at this point was still struggling to keep up, vocally, with his older brothers).

"At first, Tito, Jermaine and I would just fool around, trying to learn the songs off the radio," said Jackie. "But all of a sudden we got good – good enough so

that people who were passing by our house would stop and listen to us, sometimes even sit down on the lawn."

Maybe, Joe mused, there could

be a future for his sons as a singing group, one that might help them all escape their tough working-class milieu. "These boys," he predicted to his brother Lawrence, who was stationed with the air force, "are going to take me out of the steel mill."

And so it was that Joe Jackson appointed himself manager of the nascent boy band. He proved himself a hard taskmaster, encouraging his sons in no uncertain terms to push themselves to the limit as they practised and rehearsed, honing their skills as dancers, singers and instrumentalists. Often, the focus on music was to the exclusion of all else.

"Dad would tell us, 'Just keep up the good work. You're going to make it. Keep going,'" recalled Jackie. "But sometimes as we rehearsed we'd see the neighbour kids pass by outside on the way to the park carrying their bats and gloves, and I'd want nothing more than to be outside with them instead."

1960s

December 14, 1969, and
Ed Sullivan greets the band
for a vital TV appearance.
They would appear on the
show three times



The Jackson 5
pose for a portrait
around 1968. L-R:
Tito, Marlon, Jackie,
Jermaine and Michael

EVEN AT THAT YOUNG AGE, MICHAEL
WAS A GIFTED VOCALIST AND DYNAMIC
PERFORMER, HIS MANOEUVRES MODELLED
ON JAMES BROWN AND JACKIE WILSON



I will always love you
The Jackson Five

Still, they knew in their hearts that their hard work would pay off – especially with the addition to their ranks of fifth brother Michael (born in 1958) in 1964. That was the move that would spark their destiny.

Even at that young age, Michael was a preternaturally gifted vocalist and dynamic performer, his terpsichorean manoeuvres modelled on James Brown and Jackie Wilson. He had already demonstrated his facility as a singer: when he was just five years old, he had caused a minor sensation while at Garnett Elementary School, where he sang *Climb Every Mountain* in a school pageant. It made sense, therefore, that he should replace Jermaine, also the group's bassist, as lead vocalist and frontman, even if it did somewhat run the risk of hurting his older brother's feelings.

For a period, they were a seven-piece outfit, with Tito on guitar, Marlon, then seven years old, on tambourine and congas, as well as childhood friends Reynaud Jones and Milford Hite briefly helping out on guitar and drums.

And then, in 1965 – in August of that year, on Michael's seventh birthday, in fact – they slimmed down to a five-piece, albeit with additional live drumming support from Johnny Jackson (no relation) and assistance on keyboards from Ronny Rancifer.

But they had yet to come up with a definitive name for the group. Katherine had initially thought of The Jackson Brothers Five. But it was local talent agent Evelyn Leahy who suggested The Jackson Five.

The fixing of their name came just in time for their first public appearance at a children's fashion show, Tiny Tots Jamboree, in Glen Park, a suburb of Chicago, where they performed R&B song *Doin' The Jerk* by The Larks. The Jackson 5 proceeded to win a whole series of talent contests throughout 1966 and '67. There was one at the opening of a Big Top department store, and another at Gilroy Stadium where they performed Robert Parker's hit *Barefootin'*. There, a freakishly uninhibited Michael, with his trademark afro, sang lead and, during the instrumental break, decided to kick off his shoes and do a barefoot dance around the stage. The performance earned the brothers their first ever press write-up, in the *Gary Post Tribune*.

Soon, they entered and won the Theodore Roosevelt High School talent show, where they performed several Motown numbers including *My Girl* – they even beat a young singer called Deniece Williams, who would later have hits with *Free* and *Let's Hear It For The Boy*. They also won first prize in an amateur talent show at Gary's Memorial Auditorium and began to venture out of town, onto the so-called "chitlin' circuit" of black theatres and nightclubs around the country. They entered the Sunday Night Amateur Talent show at the Regal Theater in Chicago, where they won three weeks in a row, and won the Super Dogs final at Harlem's legendary Apollo Theater in New York, where nine-year-old Michael's singing and dancing wowed the audience.

Joseph chose this moment to make a wise investment in an array of equipment for the boys: guitars, amplifiers, and microphones. It was a well-timed move, as The Jackson 5 began touring as the opening act for a string of prominent acts such as Jerry Butler, The Temptations, The O'Jays, The Emotions, and The Delfonics, travelling to cities as far-flung as Philadelphia, New York, Kansas City and St Louis in their trusty VW van. They



MEET THE BROTHERS



JACKIE JACKSON

The oldest Jackson, Jackie was the one with the high tenor who sang on many of The Jackson 5's hits. He also co-wrote several of their Jacksons-era songs. Of all the siblings, his face and light, high-pitched speaking voice most resembled his legendary younger brother's. Jackie was at Neverland shortly after Michael's home was raided. He saw all the bugs: "They were listening in on him all the time," he revealed. "I couldn't believe how he was treated."



TITO JACKSON

Tito was "the quiet one" of the family, the mysterious one with the deep speaking voice. At the height of Jacksonmania he inadvertently got stuck on the roof of a moving limo as hordes of screaming girls chased the vehicle down the road. When the brothers made the move from Motown to CBS in 1976, Tito's guitar work became more prevalent. In later years, he was known for wearing a deerstalker and smoking a gold electronic cigarette, and had a penchant for luxury cars.



JERMAINE JACKSON

Jermaine was the lead singer (and rhythm guitarist) with The Jackson Brothers, switching to bass and back-up vocals with the arrival of Michael. He was the first brother to go solo, achieving success with his 1980 album *Let's Get Serious*. Arguably the most volatile Jackson in the wake of his brother's death, Jermaine described himself as Michael's "backbone", saying he wished his life had been taken instead. In 2007 he appeared on *Celebrity Big Brother UK*.



MARLON JACKSON

Only 17 months older than Michael, Marlon had a reputation as the keenest dancer as well as the joker of the pack: when this writer interviewed The Jacksons in 2013, Marlon kept slipping into a mockney accent, for humorous effect. In his book *Moonwalk*, Michael described him as a "prankster – he used to be the one who'd always get in trouble in the early days". Later, he became a successful real estate agent in Southern California and had various business enterprises.



RANDY JACKSON

Born in 1961, Randy was the youngest of the brothers – he was only three when The Jackson 5 formed and so couldn't join. He appeared live for the first time in 1971 and was on every tour playing congas and other instruments, but didn't officially become a member until 1975, when he replaced Jermaine in the move to CBS. Aged 16, he co-wrote The Jacksons' most successful latterday single, *Shake Your Body (Down To The Ground)*, with Michael. He also worked on *Off The Wall*.



The early incarnation of The Jackson 5, with Johnny on drums

also supplemented their income with early-evening performances in strip clubs, much to their mother's chagrin, although she appreciated the income; by the middle of 1968, impressively, The Jackson Five were earning up to \$600 a gig.

"It was enough for us to buy our first colour television, a new washer and dryer, a new sofa, new lamps, and a new table for the living room," gasped the boys' mother.

Huge fans of Motown's output, the boys realised from the off that the Detroit label was their ideal musical home. Indeed, it was a Motown performer, Gladys Knight, who sent a demo tape of their music to Motown's boss Berry Gordy. Sadly, he rejected it and sent it back (he had other acts on his mind at the time, notably Stevie Wonder). It was an early and unusual defeat for the group.

Luckily, Joe Jackson found an alternative outlet for his sons'

musical gifts in small local record company Steeltown Records, run by singer, record producer, and label founder-owner Gordon Keith, who paid for them to record their first ever sessions in 1967.

One of those Steeltown recordings became The Jackson 5's tentative first single, *Big Boy*, issued in January 1968 (the previous July, they had cut the same track for Chicago's One-derful! Records, playing all of their own instruments at the label's Tone Studios, with Michael, then eight years old, on lead vocals). A soul ballad with elements of doo wop, written by Chicago musician Eddie Silvers, *Big Boy*, backed with *You've Changed*, was premiered on a local radio station called WWCA, much to the family's excitement. It failed to chart but did manage to sell more than 10,000 copies. A second, more energetic, uptempo number, *We Don't Have To Be Over 21* (*To Fall In Love*)/*Jam Session*, was earmarked as The

Jackson 5's second single, but it was never released. The intention was also for them to follow it up with an 11-track album, and Steeltown made sure they did a photo-shoot just in case.

However, Berry Gordy must have got wind of their modest successes at the Gary, Indiana label and regretted his earlier rejection of them, because they received an invitation to come and audition for Motown in early 1968. Joe Jackson took the invitation so seriously he cancelled what would have been The Jackson 5's TV debut on *The David Frost Show* in New York to make the audition at Motown in Detroit.

It must have gone well because, on July 26, 1968, the group signed a deal with the prestigious pop imprint. That Christmas, to show how significant a

signing they were, they were invited by Berry Gordy himself to perform at his pool house in Detroit in front of many of the label's luminaries, including Diana

Ross, Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, The Temptations and The Four Tops. "It was nerve-wracking. Scary," recalled Jackie.

The following August, just as Motown moved offices from Detroit to California, the Jackson family relocated to the West Coast – Joe, Tito, Johnny Jackson and Ronny Rancifer drove to Los Angeles while Jackie, Jermaine, Marlon and Michael flew out a few days later, where they were put up at the Motel Tropicana on Santa Monica Boulevard. While Motown searched for a more permanent residence for the family, they also spent time at the Hollywood Hills home of The Supremes' legendary frontwoman. Eventually, The Jacksons would settle in a house off Sunset Boulevard, at 1610 Queens Road in the Hollywood Hills.

Next, the group met public relations supremo Bob Jones, who would prove significant in Michael Jackson's solo career, as well as Susanne De

POP UP Signing to Motown also enabled the family to escape Gary, Indiana, where gang violence was escalating. Joe suffered a broken jaw when his drums were robbed; Tito was held up at gunpoint at school



1960s



1960s



Passe, the young Motown executive who would become their PR and mentor. The divine Ms Ross introduced the label's new charges to the world at a private showcase at Daisy's Disco on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, on August 11, 1969 – although Gladys Knight had been the first to mention the Jackson brothers to Berry Gordy, and soul artist Bobby Taylor had brought them to Motown, Ross was credited with discovering them, partly to help promote The Jackson 5, but also to draw attention to herself as she made the difficult transition from a Supreme to a solo star.

There was a further showcase a few weeks later, on August 22, this time on TV, at the Miss Black America Pageant in New York, filmed at Madison Square Garden, where the boys performed The Isley Brothers' incendiary *It's Your Thing*.

Yet it was in the recording studio that the really interesting work was being done. The bulk of The Jackson 5's time was spent honing their early sessions with Taylor and writer-producers Freddy Perren, Deke Richards, Hal Davis and "Fonce" Mizell, the latter four collectively known as The Corporation, a more anonymous version of Motown's iconic songwriting teams such as Holland-Dozier-Holland.

For The Jackson Five's first single, Berry Gordy and The Corporation picked a song – *I Want You Back* – that Perren had originally written for Gladys Knight And The Pips and later for Diana Ross, when it was known as *I Wanna Be Free*. Recorded at The Sound Factory, West Hollywood, the track was about someone regretting breaking up with a lover too hastily. The lyric – "Every street you walk on, I leave tear stains on the ground/ Following the girl I didn't even want around" – was mature, considering the boy expected to sing it was barely 11 years old.

More time was spent polishing and refining *I Want You Back* than all the other songs on their forthcoming debut album combined... but it was worth it. From the opening piano trill to the electrifying rhythm guitar figure, swelling strings and melodic bassline, courtesy of the great Wilton Felder, later of The Crusaders, everything about *I Want You Back* was just right. Supported by Louis Shelton on lead guitar and Tito on rhythm (he was the only brother at this point allowed by Gordy to play an instrument), Johnny Jackson on drums, Rancifer on keyboards and his four brothers on backing vocals, Michael's performance was an eruption of pre-teen emotion, yet remarkably controlled and assured. As for the song, it was just under three minutes of pop brilliance, its exuberance designed to express the protagonist's joyous realisation that his former partner was The One.

Surprisingly, the only person seemingly unimpressed by The Jackson 5's opening salvo was their mother. "I received an advance copy of the single. With great anticipation I placed it on the turntable. Was I disappointed! Oh my God," she exclaimed in her 1990 book, *My Family, The Jacksons*. She continued: "How does Motown think it's going to sell something like this?" I said to myself. I thought I was pretty good at picking hits, and the record didn't seem to have much going for it. I thought that the tracks were too crowded, and that the producers hadn't brought out the boys' best vocal qualities. They had lead singer Michael and the others yelling, instead."

She was alone in her disappointment. Released on October 7, 1969, *I Want You Back* (backed with a cover of Who's Lovin' You by Smokey Robinson) reached No. 1 in the US and No. 2 in the UK



MICHAEL JACKSON AND DIANA ROSS

In April 1981, Michael was asked about his relationship with Diana Ross. Looking sheepishly to the floor, he hesitated before finally replying: "We're just good friends."

There were question marks about the extent of Michael's friendship with Ross ever since the erstwhile Supreme helped catapult the child star to world fame in 1969.

They later appeared together in a variety of sketches, sang at each other's concerts and starred in the movie *The Wiz* together with her as Dorothy to his Scarecrow.

"Although she was older than Michael, they had a real connection and that connection, I think, and that friendship really moved throughout his career," Emil Wilbekin, managing editor of Essence.com and a founding member of *Vibe* magazine under Quincy Jones, told news channel CNN.

Michael considered her the ultimate in female pulchritude and used to rib his sisters Rebbie, LaToya and Janet that they weren't as pretty as Ross. In a 1982 interview for the *Ebony Jet Showcase*, Jackson said he considered Ross to be one of his few confidantes.

"She is the kind of person, I can tell her anything, the most private of secrets. And she tells me her secrets as well," he whispered.

He idolised Ross, 14 years his senior, while she undoubtedly had maternal feelings towards him. But still, throughout their friendship, there

were rumours of romance, which grew after Michael released the 1988 single *Dirty Diana*, although he insisted it was in fact composed on the subject of groupies.

Some speculated that their special bond came from their shared experience in groups in which they eventually eclipsed the other members. Others noted the flirty frisson between them.

"I knew you were going to be a star, I really did," Ross said to Jackson during her 1981 TV special. "What I didn't know is that you were going to get so sexy." Jackson proceeded to say the same about her, and then addressed the TV audience: "Don't you guys think she's sexy?"

In the Eighties, it was suggested that Michael's numerous plastic surgery operations were attempts by him to replicate the physiognomy of his mentor and idol. The fact is, he was fascinated by her. He loved her regal bearing and charismatic presence. He studied her every move.

"She taught me so much," he once said. "I used to just sit in the corner and watch the way she moved. She was art in motion. I studied the way she moved, the way she sang – just the way she was."

His desire to mimic her knew no bounds. He told her: "I want to be just like you, Diana." She replied: "You just be yourself." One of Jackson's fatal flaws was that he didn't know what "being himself" meant... and his obsession with Ross bore that out.



Diana and Jackson in 1979's musical film, *The Wiz*



The Jackson 5 in full flow for an early TV performance in 1969

and eventually sold six million copies worldwide. It was ranked 121st on Rolling Stone's list of The 500 Greatest Songs Of All Time, and ninth on its list of the 100 Greatest Pop Songs since 1963. In 1999, it was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame. In the 21st century, online publication Pitchfork named it the second best song of the 1960s after The Beach Boys' *God Only Knows*, asserting that the chorus contains "possibly the best chord progression in pop music history", while The Daily Telegraph called it "arguably the greatest pop record of all time".

There were a number of live appearances that helped propel *I Want You Back* to the top. On October 18, The Jackson 5 made their second-ever TV appearance in an episode of *The Hollywood Palace* hosted by Diana Ross, who was that night making her farewell appearance with The Supremes. After the latter opened the show with a melody from the Broadway musical *Hair*, La Ross took the microphone and made a special announcement.

"It's wonderful to return as your hostess," she said, her words singling out the youngest brother for special attention, a notable early sign of his solo superstardom to come, "especially tonight, when I have the pleasure of introducing a great young star who has been in the business all of his life. He has worked with his family, and when he sings and dances, he lights up the stage. Here he is, Michael Jackson and The Jackson Five!"

Dressed in suits that their parents had bought for them in Indiana, The Jackson 5 performed the ballad *Can You Remember*, which would appear on their first album, as well as Sly & The Family Stone's *Sing A Simple Song* and James Brown's *There Was A Time*, the latter with Ross and Sammy Davis Jr. There was time for one final track.

POP UP In LA, before royalties began to stream in from the hits, the whole Jackson family was getting by on \$100 a week. With 13 mouths to feed, their mother was glad she had experience, as she said, in "stretching a dollar".



"Now we'd like to do our very first release on Motown," Michael proclaimed, looking straight into the camera. "It's on sale everywhere!" With that, The Jackson Five launched into a stunning version of *I Want You Back*, the studio audience's rapturous response surely repeated in homes across the country.

On December 14, like so many international singing sensations before them, including Elvis Presley and The Beatles, The Jackson 5 appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* where they performed Sly & The Family Stone's *Stand!*, *Who's Lovin' You* and *I Want You Back*, Michael looking cuddly yet charismatic in his magenta cowboy hat.

Four days later, the group's debut album was released. *Diana Ross Presents The Jackson 5* featured Ross-penned liner notes on the back cover, in which she enthusiastically extolled the "honesty" and "talent" of the band and confirmed her role in discovering

them. *I Want You Back* would be the only track lifted off for release as a single, but its infectious bubblegum funk'n'soul provided the template for much of the rest of the record.

Album opener *Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah* was certainly on the sweet side, but it wasn't saccharine. A version of the song composed by Allie Wrubel with lyrics by Ray Gilbert from the Disney 1946 live action and animated movie *Song Of The South*, Michael took the lead vocal part, with help from Tito. The funkier, grittier *Nobody*, composed by The Corporation, featured Michael and Jermaine. Following *I Want You Back* was *Can You Remember*, a lush, melancholy ballad co-written by the great architect of symphonic soul, Thom Bell – producer and writer for the wonderful Delfonics and, later, The Stylistics among others – and Delfonics leader William Hart. Michael and Jermaine sang Holland-Dozier-Holland's

1960s





POP UP Early – and uncredited – Jackson 5 producer Bobby Taylor started his career in a band alongside Tommy Chong, later of Cheech & Chong fame. Motown would edge him out of the picture by 1970

Standing In The Shadows Of Love with adult aplomb, investing it with some of the shivery drama of the hit version by The Four Tops. Michael sang popular standard *You've Changed* alone while Jermaine took the lead on the cover of Stevie Wonder's evergreen *My Cherie Amour*. Michael sounded astonishingly mature on *Who's Lovin' You*, and Michael and Jermaine together crooned Marvin Gaye's *Chained*. There was nothing bubblegum about Jermaine's punchy, powerful rendition of Norman Whitfield and Eddie Holland's hit for The Temptations, *(I Know) I'm Losing You*.

Sly Stone's *Stand!* was the first track to feature Marlon Jackson alongside Michael and Jermaine, and although it wasn't quite as explosive as the original it was no slouch. Finally, Michael and Jermaine were a credit to Ivy Jo Hunter and William "Mickey" Stevenson on that Motown songwriting duo's *Born To Love You* (the LP closer was an eleventh-hour replacement for a cover of *Reach Out, I'll Be There* by The Four Tops).

Recorded between May and August '69 and produced by Bobby Taylor (except for *Nobody* and *I Want You Back*, produced by the Corporation), *Diana Ross Presents The Jackson 5* reached No. 5 on America's Pop Albums chart and spent nine weeks at No. 1 on the R&B/Black Albums chart.

It was a critical hit, too. *Rolling Stone's* review drew comparisons between the Jackson siblings, then aged between 11 and 18, and earlier teen stars such as

Frankie Lymon and Little Stevie Wonder. It praised the arrangements and instrumental backing from the Motown players, the brothers' "exuberance and flair", and the quality of the material, singling out their version of *Stand!* ("captures the rhythmic complexity and poignant message of the original") and particularly *I Want You Back*, which the magazine deemed "the most energetic piece of soul music since Aretha's *Respect*".

With their debut album, The Jackson 5 simultaneously marked the end of one era of black pop music and the beginning of another: a new

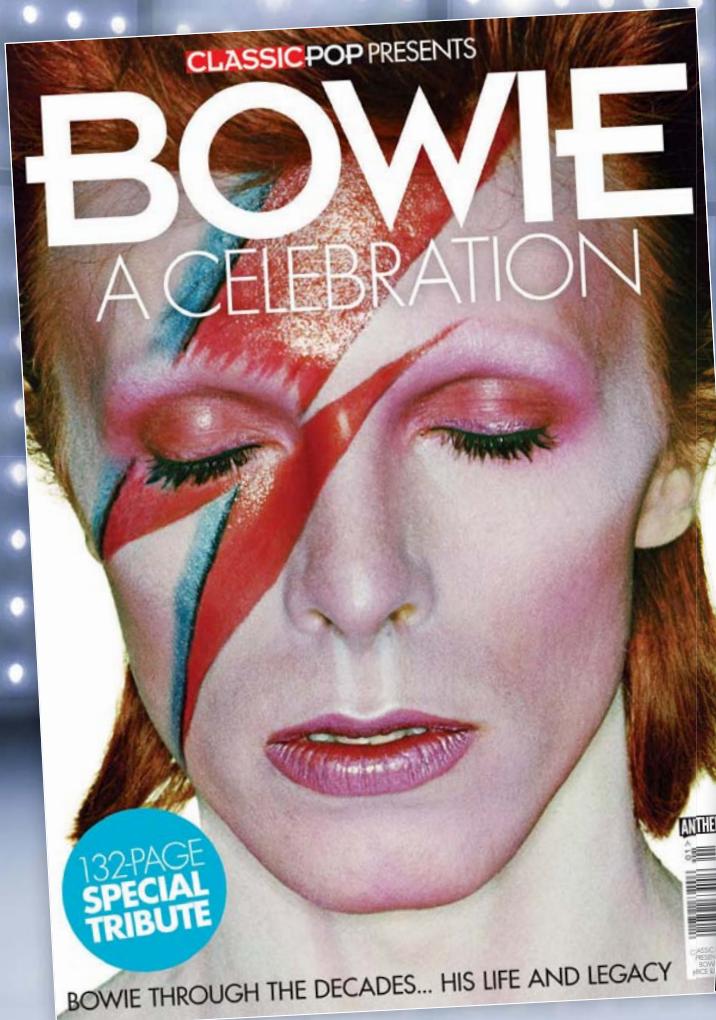
golden age of crossover pop-soul. It guaranteed them a place in the new decade, alongside fellow Motown stars Wonder, Gaye, Robinson and Ross, and non-Motown musicians from Sly to Al Green, Isaac Hayes and Curtis Mayfield. *I Want You Back* was No. 1 in January 1970 – The Jackson 5 couldn't have made a more emphatic start to the '70s. The fact that it was the first in a series of four consecutive No. 1s for the brothers – the first time in history that a band or artist had achieved such a feat – made it all the more evident that The Jackson 5 were here to stay. ■

WITH THEIR DEBUT ALBUM, THE JACKSON 5 MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A NEW GOLDEN AGE OF CROSSOVER POP-SOUL

LISTEN UP!
From *I Want You Back* to *Born To Love You*, here's a baker's dozen of the very best of The Jackson 5...
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Jones shares a joke with Jackson at the 26th Annual Grammy Awards, in 1984

JACKSON WITH... QUINCY JONES

THEIR HAT-TRICK OF ALBUMS CHANGED POP – AND SOCIAL CULTURE – FOREVER. IN EFFECT, MAESTRO PRODUCER QUINCY JONES HELPED REINVENT MICHAEL JACKSON...

JULIE BURNS

Of course, Michael Jackson sparkled as a child into teen star long before he met multi-award-winning musical impresario Quincy Jones. By 1972, aged 14, as part of The Jackson 5, he'd already released a quartet of Motown solo studio albums. They'd had several Top 40 hits; though with fluctuating sales and frustration with a lack of creative control, in 1975 the boys moved to CBS' Epic Records as The Jacksons. This would prove fortuitous for young Michael, as under Epic he would be able to forge his artistic concepts into a legendary album trio just a few years later.

In 1978 the singer starred as The Scarecrow in the film musical *The Wiz*, its scores arranged by Quincy Jones. A master musical fusionist, Jones liked to blend pop, soul, hip-hop, jazz, classical, African and Brazilian sounds. Despite *The Wiz*'s critical dissing, Jones recalled Jackson's dedication to his role, comparing his acting style to that of Sammy Davis Jr. Working with him had been a favourite time, he said. In fact it marked the start of a nine-year partnership.

Jackson had asked Jones for producer recommendations on his next album before Jones offered and was accepted. Creativity and co-production credit was given to Jackson on self-written

songs such as the joyful falsetto of the album's first single release (and No. 1 Grammy winner), *Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough*.

At first, Jones found the 21 year old "introverted, shy and non-assertive". However, the result of their first collaboration was conclusive: *Off The Wall* was Jackson's breakthrough album as an adult. Far removed from the smooth Jackson brother harmonies, the eclectic mix of funk, disco-pop, soul, soft rock, jazz and pop ballads stretched from *Workin' Day And Night* to *Rock With You* and *She's Out Of My Life* – a track which led one critic to suggest, "[it] became a signature similar to the way *My Way* served Frank Sinatra". Jones – who had worked with Sinatra – later made a similar comparison; "He has some of the same qualities as the great jazz singers I'd worked with: Ella, Sinatra, Sassy, Aretha, Ray Charles, Dinah. Each of them had that purity, that strong signature sound and that open wound that pushed them to greatness."

Off The Wall was the first album by a solo artist to yield four US Top 10 hits. *Melody Maker* even went as far as saying that Jackson was "probably the best singer in the world right now in terms of style and technique". Equally, Jones was seen as the most hip and powerful record producer on the planet.

In the same musical vein but even more imaginative, 1982's *Thriller* became a global phenomenon. The best-selling album of all time, it became the first album ever to be certified 32 times multi-platinum for US sales. Add to that a record-breaking eight Grammy Awards, including Album of the Year.

Yet in the brief time-frame between his two seminal LPs, Jackson was lonely and unhappy. He was also disappointed by *Off The Wall* not having done even better – specifically not getting Record of the Year – and by undercurrents of racial discrimination tethering promotion and exposure. Case in point: in 1980 *Rolling Stone* declined Jackson's offer to showcase him in a cover feature. To this snub Jackson said, "I've been told over and over that black people on the cover of magazines doesn't sell copies... just wait. Someday those magazines are going to be begging me for an interview..."

Wanting to break down implied colour bars was an issue Jackson had in common with Quincy Jones. By the Sixties the latter was the first black composer to be embraced by the Hollywood establishment. In 1961, as vice president of Mercury Records, he became the first high level executive of a major record company. In '63, he turned his talents to the movie world, another musical area closed to blacks, and went on to compose some 33 film scores.

In reuniting with Jackson on *Thriller*, both artists were enabled in breaking down racial barriers. This they achieved in famously meeting with US President Ronald Reagan at the White House and, more overtly, via MTV. Significantly, the album was one of the first to use music videos as killer promotional tools: those for *Thriller*, *Billie Jean*, and *Beat It* were constantly on MTV rotation – once CBS president Walter Yetnikoff had "a word" with the music station: ("I'm not going to give you any more videos and I'm going to go public and f***ing tell them about the fact you don't want to play music by a black guy"). They relented.

Jackson's unprecedented success – and as a black artist in the Eighties – helped others gain mainstream attention, such as Prince with his *Little Red Corvette*. As a December 1982 review in *The New York Times* put it, *Thriller* was helping rid "the destructive barriers that spring up regularly between white and black music". Its video also set new levels for the whole industry. The John Landis title track mini-movie was ahead of its time, marking a milestone not only in Jackson's career, but in the history of pop music.

On Jackson's unique influence, perhaps *Time* said it best: "Star of records, radio, rock video. A one-man rescue team for the music business. A songwriter who sets the beat for a decade. A dancer with the fanciest feet on the street. A singer who cuts across all boundaries of taste and style and colour too." Culture critic Nelson George wrote that Jackson "has educated R Kelly, Usher, Justin Timberlake and countless others, with *Thriller* as a textbook". Ably assisted and abetted by Quincy Jones, it should be added. According to Jones' website, *Thriller* has sold over 50 million copies worldwide, and counting – and was reissued in 2008 as *Thriller 25*.

From the best-selling album to the best-selling single of all time: Jones produced 1985's historic charity disc, *We Are The World*. Co-written by Lionel Ritchie and Michael Jackson, it featured a cast of 45 A-listers, including Jackson who sang with Diana Ross – giving conductor Jones a task akin to "putting a watermelon in a coke bottle".

Raising more than \$63 million for Ethiopian famine relief, the venture inspired Jackson and Jones to pursue further humanitarian projects.

Their own musical union concluded with what the *Miami Herald* called the "most hotly anticipated album in history", *Bad*. It could never quite match the sales of *Thriller*, yet was only second to it in terms of global success. The formidable follow-up again made history as being the first album to have five consecutive singles peak at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100: *I Just Can't Stop Loving You*, *Bad*, *The Way You Make Me Feel*, *Man In The Mirror*, and *Dirty Diana*. Such was his stature that Jackson's tour for *Bad* was a major coup, grossing some \$125 million.

In a 2002 interview, Jackson suggested he might work with Jones again. In 2007, when Jones was asked by *NME*, he said, "Man, please! We already did that. I have talked to him about working with him again but I've got too much to do. I've got 900 products, I'm 74 years old."

Today, aged 83, Quincy Jones' musical prowess hardly shows signs of slowing down. Outliving his gifted musical companion by 33 years, following Jackson's premature passing on June 25, 2009, Jones said: "I am absolutely devastated at this tragic and unexpected news. For Michael to be taken away from us so suddenly at such a young age, I just don't have the words... to this day, the music we created together on *Off The Wall*, *Thriller*, and *Bad* is played in every corner of the world and the reason for that is because he had it all... talent, grace, professionalism and dedication. He was the consummate entertainer and his contributions and legacy will be felt upon the world forever. I've lost my little brother today, and part of my soul has gone with him."

LITTLE WONDER

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONES

Nominated for seven Oscars and 79 Grammys – winning 27, more than any living musician – Quincy Jones's firsts are many: in the mid-Fifties he was the first popular conductor/arranger to record with a Fender bass, while his TV theme *Ironside* was the first synth-based pop theme tune. His 1989 album *Back On The Block* was the first-ever fusion of bebop and hip-hop; success with his own Quest Records includes the gold album *Substance* by New Order. Aside from work on some 400 albums, he has produced film into Broadway hit *The Color Purple*, and TV's *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. In 2001, his autobiography was complemented by Rhino records' box set, *Q: The Musical Autobiography of Quincy Jones*. He was named a Kennedy Center Honoree 'for his contributions to the cultural fabric of the USA'. And to end on a Jackson note, *Thriller* was included in the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry of culturally significant recordings.





1 9 7 0 s

EASY AS 1-2-3

IN THE SEVENTIES MICHAEL JACKSON MADE THE TRANSITION FROM CHILD SENSATION WITH THE JACKSON 5 TO ADULT SUPERSTAR – BUT HE HAD TO DITCH HIS BROTHERS TO DO IT. HERE IS THE STORY OF HIS SECOND AMAZING DECADE, FROM ABC TO OFF THE WALL...

PAUL LESTER



The Jackson 5 at
the International
Amphitheater in Chicago,
September 30 1972



IT'S

hard to believe that during the Sixties Michael Jackson and his brothers only released a couple of singles and one album, but it was enough to cement their reputation as the nascent superstars of pop and soul. But if their output in their first decade was sparing, in their second it was torrential. *I Want You Back* opened the floodgates, and after that, music from Michael and The Jackson 5 came in an unstoppable deluge. The only surprise, given their youth, was the sustained professionalism of it all, and the very fact that they survived.

Motown wasted no time in following up the debut single. In February 1970, The Jackson 5's second 45rpm, *ABC*, was released.

Penned, as was its predecessor, by The Corporation – label boss Berry Gordy, Freddie Perren, Alphonso Mizell and Deke Richards – and featuring many of the same musicians (including Wilton Felder on bass and Louis Shelton on guitar), *ABC* had all the brash joie de vivre of *I Want You Back*, plus some juvenile novelty value, which made it a surefire hit. A surefire No. 1 chart-topper, in fact – it knocked The Beatles' *Let It Be* off the top of the Billboard Hot 100 and quickly became one of the group's signature songs.

Within a few months, they had a third No. 1: *The Love You Save*, with a breathless vocal from Michael and a cute middle-eight during which he spells out the acronym "S.T.O.P." The song's pace and feel bore a resemblance to the 1965 No. 1 single *Stop! In The Name Of Love* – it was perhaps no coincidence that The Jackson 5 had replaced The Supremes as Motown's biggest-selling group.

And then, in August 1970, they reached the top again, with the exquisite ballad *I'll Be There*, penned

by Berry Gordy, Hal Davis and Willie Hutch, which showcased a frighteningly mature Michael vocal as he pleaded flawlessly over an aching melody and shivery harpsichords.

With their fourth consecutive single reaching pole position in the US charts (and staying there for five weeks and selling two and a half million copies in the process), The Jackson 5 made history.

"When they told us *I Want You Back* was going to be on the radio, we gathered around," Jermaine reminisced to this writer in 2014 about their spectacular, and historic, four-single run. "Imagine – five guys with afros staring at a transistor. We jumped up and down so much, our neighbours heard and came over."

"We were shocked," added Marlon in the same interview. "We were just kids."

"ABC was more nail-biting," chipped in Tito.

"We'd been told the second hit is harder than the first, so to watch that one go up the charts was even more amazing. Then it happened with *The Love You Save*, too. We didn't think we'd do it a fourth time with *I'll Be There*. But it replaced Marvin Gaye's *I Heard It Through The Grapevine* as Motown's biggest record, selling seven million."

"So our first four records got to No. 1," concluded Jermaine. "The first time in history."

They weren't just breaking records with their singles; they were doing it with their concerts as well. In July 1970 the Jackson 5 played a gig at the Los Angeles Forum before an audience of 18,000 – an attendance record at the venue – and the event demonstrated, as if there was any doubt, that devotion for the group was reaching fever pitch. At one point in the show, teenage girls invaded the stage, forcing the boys to run for safety. Even The

POP UP Michael recalled The Jackson 5's first tour in 1970 to Soul magazine: "The girls just come at the stage... we always have to run off stage, we can't thank the audience and stuff – we just have to run."



1970s

Michael, still aged just
16, on stage in London,
February 1975



1970s





Corporation's Deke Richards, amid the pandemonium, "almost got trampled to death".

But in some areas, it was business as usual for the tweens and teenagers. They kicked off their first national tour in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where they were accompanied by a private tutor, Rose Fine.

"The boys handled their sudden superstardom better than I could have hoped," wrote their mother Katherine in her book, *My Family, The Jacksons*. "They were justifiably proud of their success, but they didn't let the success go to their heads. If Joe [their father] and I had detected one or more of them getting too big of an ego, we would have talked to them. But we just never had to."

It would have been easy to have let all the attention and acclaim go to their heads, so all credit to them for keeping their feet on the ground. Jackie recalled

what it was like to experience Jacksonmania first-hand as their four singles became popular not just in the States, but all over the world.

"I remember coming to London the first time," he told this writer in 2014. "We had 10,000 screaming fans at the airport. They were in sleeping bags at 5am, waiting for us to land. It caused quite a ruckus. We had police escorts, but that didn't work. There weren't enough police."

Their schedule was frantic. As Marlon stated, "When we were still trying to make it, life was hectic. Once we did make it, life was even more hectic. We'd come home from school and have a split-second to grab a bite. Then it was off to the studio. We'd record a song a day at Motown. If we were lucky, we got home early enough to do a bit of homework before we fell asleep. It was like this every weekday. Then on Saturday we rehearsed."

Their albums came almost as thick and fast as their singles. They released four in one 12-month period – hard to believe today, when artists regularly take years, sometimes even decades, between albums. After issuing their debut album in December 1969, Motown put out follow-up *ABC* in May 1970. It included the singles *ABC* and *The Love You Save* as well as the latter's B-side, *I Found That Girl*, the only song to feature a lead vocal from Jermaine, plus covers of Stevie Wonder's *Never Had A Dream Come True* and *Don't Know Why I Love You*, Holland-Dozier-Holland's (*Come 'Round Here*) *I'm The One You Need*, Funkadelic's *I'll Bet You, The Young Folks* – a hit for Diana Ross & The Supremes, and Thom Bell

and William Hart's beautiful symphonic soul composition for The Delfonics, *La-La Means I Love You*.

The album sold just under 900,000 copies, more than the first album. With

money coming in, the family were able to move from Queens Road to the more showbiz-friendly environs of Bowmont Drive, where they were neighbours of Liberace and Davy Jones of The Monkees.

In quick succession, they released two more albums in 1970: the plainly titled *Third Album* in September, and the *Jackson 5 Christmas Album* a month later. The former was a compendium of new Corporation material – the hit *I'll Be There*, future singles *Mama's Pearl* and *Goin' Back To Indiana* – and classics including that other Bell-Hart standby *Ready Or Not (Here I Come)* and Smokey Robinson's *The Love I Saw In You Was Just A Mirage*, even Simon & Garfunkel's *Bridge Over Troubled Water*, all rounded off in superb fashion with *Darling Dear*. It is considered one of the best of the J5 albums, and remains their most successful to date, reaching No. 1 on the Cashbox chart and selling six million copies.

Tito, Marlon, Jackie, Michael and Jermaine perform for a Bob Hope TV special in September 1973

POP UP *Darling Dear* from *Third Album* is held up today as one of the finest recorded moments from bass genius James Jamerson, who played an integral part in what became known as the "Motown Sound"



KEEP ON WITH THE FORCE

KEY ALBUMS 1972-79

GOT TO BE THERE

MOTOWN, 1972

When Michael began recording his debut solo album, in June 1971, he was still only 12 years old – yet on opening track *Ain't No Sunshine* there is a yearning quality, even a sense of desolation, missing even from the Bill Withers original. Other highlights include *Got To Be There*, the strings-and-harpsichord-enhanced *I Wanna Be Where You Are*, and Willie Hutch's *Girl Don't Take Your Love From Me*. Before he'd even entered adolescence, he was capturing the anguish of adulthood. Uncanny.



BEN

MOTOWN, 1972

Whatever they threw at him – Stylistics eco-ballads (*People Make The World Go 'Round*), Smokey Robinson-penned Temptations classics (*My Girl*), songs penned by the guvnor (Berry Gordy's *You Can Cry On My Shoulder*), paens to rats (the title track) – Michael handled it with gusto and aplomb. Although there is nothing here as swooning as *Got To Be There* or *I Wanna Be Where You Are*, *Ben* is a strong collection that cemented Jackson's reputation as he tried to carve a niche away from his brothers.



FOREVER, MICHAEL

MOTOWN, 1975

His fourth album was a commercial dud, only scraping No. 101 on the Billboard 200, but it did contain the moderately successful singles *We're Almost There* and *Just A Little Bit Of You*, both written by Eddie and Brian Holland. It also included *One Day In Your Life*, a ballad so stunning it was crying out for a wider audience – something it achieved six years later, when it was released as a single in July 1981 and became Jackson's first solo British chart-topper on the back of the success of *Off The Wall*.



OFF THE WALL

EPIC, 1979

"You know, I was... I was wondering, you know... If you could keep on... Because the force, it's got a lot of power... And it make me feel like, ah... It make me feel like... Oooh!" Michael's fifth solo album was a remarkable collection. With Quincy Jones' chrome-plated production and Jackson's arsenal of emotional devices and vocal effects, *Off The Wall* was a dazzling contrivance. Staggeringly, with 20 million sales, Michael would release bigger albums... but not better ones.



The Yuletide album, meanwhile, comprised spirited seasonal renditions of *Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town*, *Frosty The Snowman*, *Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer*, and *I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus*. It spent the four-week holiday period at No. 1, making it that year's biggest selling Christmas album, and has since sold over three million copies.

The Jackson 5 continued their stratospheric run throughout 1971. There were singles such as *Mama's Pearl* (No. 2, January '71), *Never Can Say Goodbye* (No. 2, March '71), *Maybe Tomorrow* (No. 20, June '71) and *Sugar Daddy* (No. 10, November '71), giving them a total of seven Top 10 singles within a two-year period. And there were two albums: *Maybe Tomorrow*, a three million-seller that spent six weeks at No. 1 in the soul charts and featured the beautiful title track and *Never Can Say Goodbye*, which was every bit as breathtaking as *I'll Be There*; and *Goin' Back To Indiana*, a live/soundtrack album taken from The Jackson 5's September '71 TV show of the same name, one of several TV specials to feature the group.

That same month saw the start of their very own Saturday morning cartoon series. Called *The Jackson Five*, it ran throughout 1971 and '72 and was a fictionalised depiction of their career. Further evidence of their ubiquity were the endless magazine front covers for teen-oriented publications such as *Tiger Beat*, *Seventeen*, and *Right On!* – the latter featured at least one of the five members on the cover for over two years. Motown stepped up the marketing to capitalise on the group's youth appeal, licensing dozens of products, including stickers, posters and colouring books, as well as a board game. This was The Jackson 5 at their peak, in their pomp.

The hits continued during 1972 with *Little Bitty Pretty One*, *Lookin' Through The Windows* and *Corner Of The Sky*, but they were of the Top 20 not Top 10 variety. In order to develop the group's career and expand their audience, and realising that Michael



Michael at a playful
photo session in Los
Angeles, July 1978

1970s





The Jacksons, freshly signed to Epic, pose at Jackie's home in California, August 1978

was easily the most popular member, Motown launched his solo career. It started in 1971, with the single, *Got to Be There*, released in November of that year. With its soaring vocal and lush arrangement, it was an immediate success and suggested Michael's solo career might extend beyond the early Seventies.

Three months later, the label followed it up with the album of the same name. It showed his facility especially with "quiet storm" R&B ballads (Bill Withers' *Ain't No Sunshine*), but he was still a pop natural (*Rockin' Robin*), and there were early signs of his enormous crossover potential via the cover of Carole King's *You've Got A Friend*. It peaked at No. 14 on the US pop album chart and No. 3 on the US R&B album chart and eventually sold 900,000 copies in the US alone. *Rolling Stone* called it "slick, artful and every bit as good as the regular Jackson 5 product".

The August '71 follow-up album was even more successful. *Ben* sold five million copies, helped considerably by the title track, a song from the film of the same name, about a killer rat. The song had originally been offered to Jackson's rival Donny Osmond, but it became Michael's first solo chart-topper. Paeans to pets aside, the LP evinced the young singer's increasing maturity, with material provided by old faithfuls Stevie Wonder and Thom Bell.

Michael would release two more albums over the next couple of years: *Music & Me* (1973) and *Forever, Michael* (1975). Despite containing some excellent music (a song on the latter, *One Day In Your Life*, would become a UK No. 1 when issued as a single in 1981) and selling, respectively, two and one million copies, there was a sense of an artist growing older but failing to keep pace with shifts in audience demands and the ever-changing music scene.

It was the same for The Jackson 5. *Lookin' Through The Windows* (1972), *Skywriter* and *G.I.T.: Get It Together* (both 1973), *Dancing Machine* (1974) and *Moving Violation* (1975) sold between 1.5 and three million each, and *Dancing Machine*'s title track did particularly well, reaching No. 2 when released as a single, its hard funk sound a neat response to contemporary black dance music developments.

But their chart positions were lower than they should have been and there was a general feeling, with both The Jackson 5 and Michael, that Motown had taken them as far as they could go. The Corporation, which had produced most of their hit singles, went their separate ways in 1973. In the era of The

Commodores, Funkadelic, Ohio Players, Kool & The Gang, the reinvigorated Isley Brothers and Stevie Wonder, The Jackson 5 were starting to

look a little passé. Joe Jackson was growing tired of Motown's inability to produce hits for his sons.

By 1975, most of the group opted out of recording any more music for the label and sought greater creative control and royalties. Joe negotiated a better deal with Epic Records for the brothers, except Jermaine, who stayed with Berry Gordy, undoubtedly influenced by the fact that he was married to Gordy's daughter Hazel – he was formally replaced by Randy Jackson, three years Michael's junior. After initially suing them for breach of contract, Motown allowed the group to record for Epic, as long as they changed their name, since "The Jackson 5" was owned by Motown. And so it was that, in 1975, they were reborn as, simply, The Jacksons.

By June 1976, they set to work on their first music for Epic. The first the world got to hear of the new, improved Jacksons was in October '76, with the

CHART POSITIONS WERE LOWER THAN THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN; THERE WAS A FEELING THAT MOTOWN HAD TAKEN THEM AS FAR AS THEY COULD GO

POP UP The Jacksons unveiled the Epic deal to the press at New York's Rainbow Grill. Tito commented: "Motown sells a lot of singles. Epic sells a lot of albums." "I'm sure the promotion will be stronger," added Michael





The Jackson 5 at The Palladium, London, November 1972

release of the single *Enjoy Yourself*. It was a breezy number written and produced by Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, whose dominance over the Philadelphia soul scene was as great as Messrs Holland, Dozier and Holland's over Detroit's: their lush, strings-drenched hits for The O'Jays, Harold Melvin & The Bluenotes, The Three Degrees and The Intruders were a matter of record. *Enjoy Yourself* featured Michael and Jackie Jackson on lead vocals and sisters Janet and LaToya on backing vocals and peaked at No. 6 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart in February '77.

The success of *Enjoy Yourself* augured very well indeed for The Jacksons' debut album, a joint venture between Epic and Philadelphia International Records. A self-titled affair, recorded at Sigma Sound Studios in Philadelphia, it largely comprised material provided by the Gamble & Huff dream-team – five of the 10 tracks

were their compositions, and they produced the whole album. But *The Jacksons* was notable for two tracks they didn't write: *Blues Away* and *Style Of Life*, which were the first published songs written by Michael (the latter with Tito). *Blues Away* was a lilting affair with an easy-going gait and a cooler, more adult ambience than the Jackson 5 songs of yore, while *Style Of Life* bore the influence of Gamble & Huff and could have been played back-to-back with something like The O'Jays' Philly soul classic *Backstabbers*. Nevertheless, it proved that Michael was attuned to developments in black pop and that he could learn from the best. The album also included *Show You The Way To Go*, a languid disco-lite shuffle that, released as a single in January '77, became a fair-size hit around the world and was ubiquitous on British radio that spring. While the album only fared modestly, it did serve notice that The Jacksons were willing and

able to adapt to the new era, even if they wouldn't take full creative control till the next album but one.

"Motown wanted us to continue with our bubblegum R&B sound but we were growing up, wanting to express ourselves," as Jackie explained. Meanwhile, Michael's lead vocals on most of the record showed him transitioning successfully from adolescence to young adulthood.

Released in October '77, *Goin' Places* was the second and final Epic/Philadelphia International joint venture. Recorded between December '76 and August '77 at Sigma Sound Studios, it didn't make a huge impact on the charts, peaking at No. 63 on the Billboard 200, and it only sold just over half a million copies worldwide, but it did contain some lovely songs such as *Even Though You're Gone*, while the title track crackled with energy. It also featured two songs

"MOTOWN WANTED US TO CONTINUE WITH OUR BUBBLEGUM R&B SOUND BUT WE WERE GROWING UP, WANTING TO EXPRESS OURSELVES" – JACKIE

attributed to The Jacksons: club favourite *Different Kind Of Lady* and infectious ear-worm *Do What You Wanna*, further signs of their eagerness to get involved with writing.

However, it was on The Jacksons' next album that they were finally allowed full creative control – over writing and production.

"It was a big moment," said Marlon. "Destiny was the first time we wrote and produced an entire album. Michael was filming [1978 movie] *The Wiz* and by the time he came back we'd started writing songs."

Released in December 1978, *Destiny* eventually sold over four million copies worldwide and featured the biggest hit of their Epic sojourn to date in *Shake Your Body (Down To The Ground)*, a US No. 7 and UK No. 4 smash co-penned by Randy (with Michael), which had all the exuberance of *I Want You Back* plus the polish and pizazz of disco. Of the eight tracks ➤

POP UP Interviewed on the Dinah Shore show in 1976, Michael seemed perplexed by the concept of vacations. "I've only ever had one – last Christmas," he said. "I just stayed home, watched TV, ran a lot."



Michael, just turned solo, with
La Toya at their apartment on
New York's East Side



1970s





on the album, only one was penned by an outsider: *Blame It On The Boogie* (a UK No. 8 single), written by Mick Jackson (no relation). The other seven were by one or all of the brothers. Randy was the surprise star, contributing (with assistance from Michael) *Shake Your Body, All Night Dancin'* and *That's What You Get (For Being Polite)*. Destiny reestablished The Jacksons as a serious artistic and commercial force.

The accompanying Destiny Tour of 1979 was also a huge success. "That was a great tour," recalled Jackie. "We played more of our own songs. As the tour progressed, audiences got more intense because of the success of *Off The Wall* – Michael was the biggest artist in the world."

True enough. Just as *I Want You Back* had defined the Sixties Jacksons in the last year of the decade, so too was Michael in the Seventies defined by his own late-decade offering: the epochal *Off The Wall*, released in 1979. Talk about coming of age: Michael was still only 19 when he, engineer Bruce Swedien and producer Quincy Jones completed the recording and mixing of the album... but it was the work of a mature artist with a clear vision of how he wanted to be presented to the world. His fifth solo album was effectively a new beginning, with a bold new sound and an ambition to alter people's perception of him as "the cute kid from The Jackson 5".

It was while filming his role as The Scarecrow in the remake of *The Wizard Of Oz* known as *The Wiz* that Michael got to know Quincy Jones, the jazz and soundtrack veteran who was arranging the score for the movie. The pair struck up a friendship during the film's production and Jones agreed to produce the singer's next project.

Michael wasn't sure of the direction he wanted for it; he just knew that, after *Destiny*, his own creative control would be key. He got it: Jackson wrote, or co-wrote, three of the 10 tracks on the album – *Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough*, *Working Day And*

STRAW MAN

MICHAEL JACKSON IN THE WIZ

With elaborate scenes involving 650 dancers, 385 crew members and 1,200 costumes, Sidney Lumet's black adaptation of *The Wizard Of Oz* was a lavish, extravagant endeavour – which suited a Michael Jackson poised to enter his imperial phase with *Off The Wall*.

Lumet was initially sceptical about the idea of Jackson in the role of the Scarecrow. He considered him "a Vegas act". Quincy Jones – the musical supervisor and music producer for the film – was equally unconvinced. Nevertheless, a meeting was arranged and the 19-year-old Michael was flown to New York. Finally, Lumet and Jones saw the qualities necessary for the part. "That boy is so sweet! He's so pure!" Lumet apparently exclaimed. "I want him as the Scarecrow."

The film marked Jones' first time working with Michael (although they had met briefly some years earlier, when Jackson was 12, at Sammy Davis Jr's house – Jones would later compare Michael's acting style to that of the veteran entertainer).

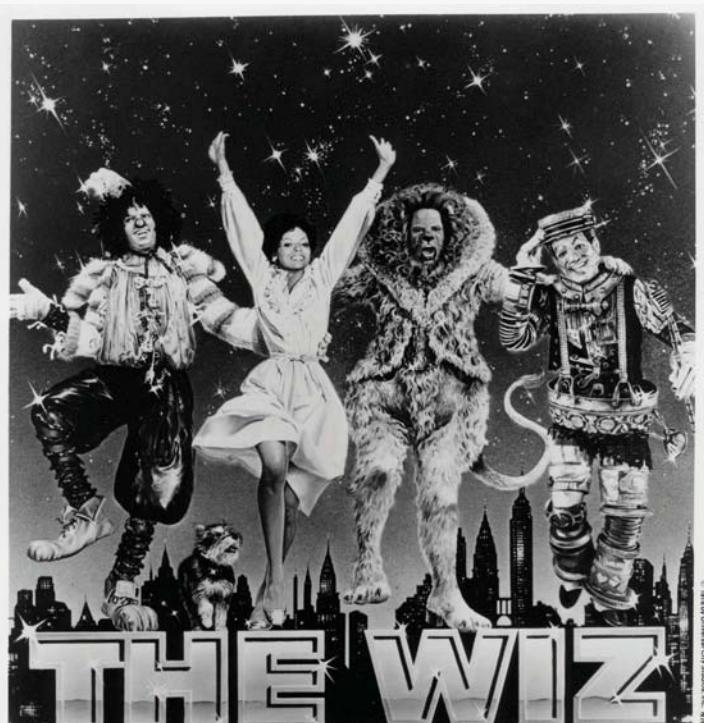
For the duration of filming, Michael and his sister La Toya moved into a Manhattan apartment, and Michael was on his own for the first time. He lived a normal life... well, give or take his eccentric predilection for taking baths in Perrier water. The shoots were arduous, lasting all day. At night, the young cast would go to

notorious niterie Studio 54, where Jackson would party alongside the stars of the day. Whenever he took to the dancefloor, the celebrity clientele would stop and gawp.

Some of the most memorable scenes were with Michael and Diana Ross, who played Dorothy, and the pair had terrific chemistry. Michael even managed to look graceful in a costume that comprised giant clown shoes, a huge curly wig, a hat and vest stuffed with scraps of newspaper, not to mention a painted-on nose; his terpsichorean influences included Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly, and you could tell.

Jackson's performance as the Scarecrow was one of the only positively reviewed elements of the film, with critics noting his "genuine acting talent" and concluding that he "provided the only genuinely memorable moments". Michael himself was even more glowing: "I don't think it could have been any better, I really don't," he said of the movie. He would even later state that his time working on *The Wiz* was "my greatest experience so far... I'll never forget that."

It's also unarguable that without *The Wiz*, Michael's career would have taken a quite different turn... because it was during filming that Jackson and Jones swapped telephone numbers and made the decision to get in touch with each other about Michael's next project – *Off The Wall*.



© 1978 Universal City Studios Inc.
Original Motion Picture Soundtrack
THE WIZ
Music Adapted & Supervised by QUINCY JONES
Also Starring MICHAEL JACKSON · NIPSEY RUSSELL · TED ROSS · LENA HORNE and RICHARD PRYOR (as 'THE WIZ')
MCA RECORDS



Michael and The Jacksons on the Destiny tour, New Orleans, October 3 1979

Night and *Get On The Floor* (co-penned with Louis Johnson of The Brothers Johnson). But his character – his cheek, his charm, his sheer class – was all over every single last second of the record.

It was a masterpiece of disco immaculacy and audacious artistry. If any record could be described as perfect, it is *Off The Wall*. Born of LA's finest recording studios, the rhythm tracks and vocals were laid down at Allen Zentz Recording, the horn section's contributions took place at Westlake Audio, and the strings were added at Cherokee Studios in West Hollywood. Following the initial sessions, audio mixing was handled by the Grammy-winning Swedien at Westlake Audio, after which the original tapes went to the A&M Recording Studio in LA for mastering.

The results were unimpeachable. Literally half the tracks – *Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough*, *Rock With You*, *Off The Wall*, *She's Out Of My Life* and *Girlfriend* – were released as singles, but the remaining five could easily have taken their place.

The phrase "all killer, no filler" might have been invented for this album. It had every base covered – Michael's intention to tick every box and appeal to every niche demographic was evident throughout. There were sensuous slow jams (*I Can't Help It*, by Stevie Wonder and Susaye Green), adult-oriented ballads (*She's Out Of My Life*), MOR soft rock (*It's The Falling In Love*, by Carole Bayer Sager and David Foster; *Girlfriend* by Paul McCartney), club bangers (*Workin' Day And Night*, *On The Floor*, *Burn This Disco Out!*), melodic, mellifluous midtempo funk (the title track)... and that's not even mentioning the two best tracks: Rod Temperton of Heatwave's

heartstoppingly gorgeous *Rock With You*, and the shimmering, magnificent *Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough*, which at once defined disco and exceeded/superseded it just as the genre was fading.

Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough also introduced Jackson's outrageous panoply of tics and mannered whoops as he sang like someone in love with his own voice. The 15-second spoken-word intro and the sudden, subsequent eruption into a disco fantasia make *Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough* worthy of inclusion in the music hall of fame. It remains arguably the greatest album opener in the history of pop music.

With *Off The Wall*, Jackson became the first solo artist to have four singles from the same album peak inside the Top 10 of the Billboard

Hot 100. As of 2014 it had reportedly sold more than 20 million copies worldwide, making it one of the best-selling albums of all time.

Even in a year that bequeathed Chic's immortal *Risqué* and Earth, Wind & Fire's mighty *I Am*, *Off The Wall* stood out. It was a triumph of sophisticated songcraft, studio slickness and marketing savvy. *Off The Wall* signalled the emergence of Michael Jackson: global superstar. It made him one of the most famous men on the planet. But it was nothing compared to what was coming... ■

POP UP Michael said he got "too wrapped up in" *She's Out Of My Life*. "I cried... the words had such a strong effect on me," he wrote in 1988. "I was 21, and so rich in some experiences while being poor in moments of true joy."



A MASTERPIECE OF DISCO IMMACULACY AND AUDACIOUS ARTISTRY... IF ANY RECORD COULD BE DESCRIBED AS PERFECT, IT WAS OFF THE WALL

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McCartney and
Jackson together in
the studio, 1980

JACKSON WITH...

PAUL McCARTNEY

WHEN MACCA MET THE SINGER ONCE MARKETED AS PART OF THE BLACK BEATLES, THEY BECAME FIRM FRIENDS. UNTIL THE UPSTART BOUGHT THE RIGHTS TO THE BEATLES' SONGS...

JOHN EARLS

Hi Paul, do you wanna make some hits?" On Christmas Day 1980, Michael Jackson rang Paul McCartney at his Sussex farm with the offer that would result in three songs and a friendship which would ultimately turn spectacularly sour. Before Jackson interrupted the McCartney vegetarian roast, the two had occasionally met. Jackson became a Beatles fan when his interest was piqued at The Jackson 5 being marketed by Motown as "The Black Beatles". The siblings were one of the more successful New Beatles touted by the industry in the wake of The Fab Four's split, ahead of The Partridge Family and The Osmonds. McCartney recognised Jackson's talent and, before the singer was out of his teens, he offered to write a song for Jackson's debut solo album. In the event, Macca kept the resulting song *Girlfriend* for Wings' 1978 album *London Town*. But, by coincidence, Quincy Jones recognised the song's Jacksonesque qualities and persuaded MJ to cover *Girlfriend* for *Off The Wall*, unaware it was initially written for him.

For his part, Jackson looked to McCartney as someone who was handling megastardom in as relaxed a manner as possible, even in the aftermath of John Lennon's murder. Wanting to learn the secret,

in the autumn of 1981 Jackson flew to London to write and record *Say Say Say* with the 39-year-old elder statesman. The two-day session was produced in secrecy by George Martin at his Air Studios.

Recognising Jackson's need for reassurance that it was possible to lead a normal life in the spotlight, after recording McCartney drove Jackson to his family farm in the tranquil village of Peasmash. Jackson was already obsessed by Peter Pan, and unnerved his host by telling him, seemingly in all seriousness, "I can fly!", just like JM Barrie's hero. The younger star was also too nervous to join in going horse riding, but otherwise charmed the McCartneys.

If he didn't quite break out the cigars and brandy, there was something of the boardroom chairman in the way McCartney gave Jackson after-dinner advice which he would later regret, showing Jackson a notebook with the logo of his songwriting publishers, MPL. "Publishing – that's where the big money is," announced McCartney, who had been busy buying up the catalogues of rock and roll-era writers like Carl Perkins and Buddy Holly since forming MPL in 1971 following The Beatles' split.

Publishing was very much at the front of McCartney's mind; he was in the middle of trying to buy back rights to The Beatles' songwriting catalogue.

During the wasteland of the band's relationships in The Beatles' rudderless final days, Lennon and McCartney's publishers Northern Songs was sold to TV mogul Lew Grade's firm ATV in 1969. Only subsequently aware just how important publishing was, at the time of recording *Say Say Say* in 1981 McCartney had formed an uneasy truce with Yoko Ono in a joint attempt to buy back Northern Songs from ATV's new owner, Australian businessman Robert Holmes a Court. The following year, and despite being a Beatles fan, Holmes a Court decided not to sell, leaving Ono and McCartney to blame each other for not being convincing enough with the Australian.

McCartney was at least able to throw himself into a purple patch of songwriting. In April 1982, the month his album *Tug Of War* was released, he went back into the studio with Jackson, this time in LA with Quincy Jones. *The Girl Is Mine* would be one of the first songs finished for *Thriller*, while the other song from the session, *The Man*, would end up the superstars' forgotten duet as an album track on McCartney's 1983 album *Pipes Of Peace*.

With its greasy guitar and curiously formal lyrics about a man who has it all, *The Man* sounds more like an ITV sitcom theme than two of the world's best singers at the top of their game. There is at least some joy to be had from hearing McCartney try to emulate Jackson's falsetto heading into the first chorus.

It's easy to forget now, but *The Girl Is Mine* was the first single from *Thriller*. The backing band on *The Girl Is Mine* was Africa hitmakers Toto, not exactly known for threatening to revolutionise pop music. A decent enough romp, the song's knockabout spirit was at least in part down to the atmosphere in the studio. Jackson and McCartney bonded over watching old Loony Toons cartoons, "throwing stuff at each other and making jokes" according to 24-year-old Jackson. If it isn't a classic, it was one of Jackson's favourites to record for *Thriller*. "Working with Paul McCartney was pretty exciting and we had fun," he gushed.

McCartney's second major piece of advice to Jackson in Sussex had been to ensure his videos were entertaining – yet there was no video for *The Girl Is Mine*. That was rectified for *Say Say Say*, when it was finally released as a single in October 1983, almost exactly a year after *The Girl Is Mine*. The first single from *Pipes Of Peace*, its video depicted McCartney and Jackson as carnival hucksters Mac and Jack in cahoots with a con artist played by Linda McCartney. Made by *Beat It* director Bob Giraldi, Mac and Jack's tales of strength potions and vaudeville clowning are as primitive as McCartney's Deep South accent, but it was one of the first videos to feature musicians "acting", complete with dialogue.

And that appeared to be that. But, unbeknownst to McCartney, his younger charge was being encouraged by Columbia Records boss Walter Yetnikoff to pursue his ambitions of becoming a songwriting publisher. Yetnikoff had signed McCartney to Columbia for £16 million, which negated any of the usual wrangling over superstar duets about which singer's release schedule took priority. But Yetnikoff's advice to Jackson backfired when Robert Holmes a Court decided to sell ATV Music in 1985 after all. The Beatles' catalogue was the only part of ATV Music which made any serious money, and Holmes a Court wanted out – though he kept the rights to *Penny Lane* as a gift to his daughter Penny, which she still owns.

Initial rumours implied ATV's main bidders would be EMI, Japanese music executive Shoo Kasaunu... and Abba producer Stig Anderson. If Jackson apparently wasn't interested, then nor were McCartney and Yoko Ono, either together or separately. Jackson later claimed he approached both Macca and Ono to seek their approval. And indeed McCartney's manager John Eastman – Linda's brother – implied that buying the rights back was too expensive.

In August 1985, Jackson bought ATV for £33 million. Quoted in Philip Norman's book *Paul McCartney: The Biography*, McCartney's producer Hugh Padgham said: "The air turned blue." Considering he wasn't interested himself, McCartney's fury seems odd at first. But, if he really couldn't afford it, it must have been galling that a friend – and a much younger upstart at that – was rubbing his nose in it. In fact, it wasn't so much the sale that really angered McCartney: it was that Jackson refused to up his royalty percentage from ATV. "I wanted a pay rise and didn't get one," McCartney fumed.

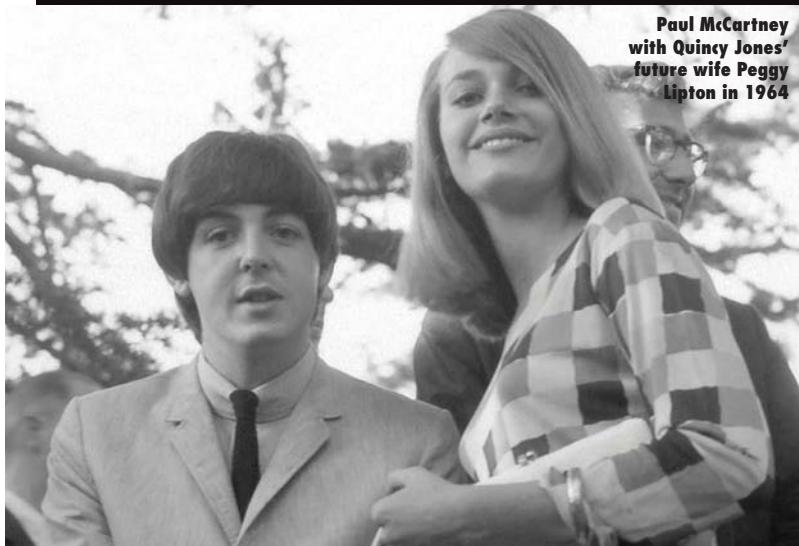
Following Jackson's death, the exact ownership of The Beatles' songs looks murky. It appears that, from 2018, McCartney and Ono can have first refusal to the rights again as part of a royalties agreement that reverts copyright back to songwriters 56 years after their songs were first recorded. Regardless of future ownership, Mac and Jack's carnival friendship was long over by the time of Jackson's death.

There was one other sting for McCartney from Jackson, this time much less deliberate. When The Beatles released "new" single *Free As A Bird* around their *Anthology* TV series in December 1995, it reached No. 2 in the UK. Keeping it from the top spot? *Earth Song* by Michael Jackson.

LITTLE WONDER

HE AND MRS JONES

If Michael Jackson and Paul McCartney had a blast recording *The Girl Is Mine* and *The Man* in Los Angeles, the sessions were slightly less amusing for Quincy Jones. Since 1974, the producer had been married to Peggy Lipton. An actress/singer, before finding success in 1968 playing fragile Julie Barnes in landmark hippy TV drama series *The Mod Squad*, Lipton dated Paul McCartney. McCartney stopped their post-dating friendship when he married Linda and hadn't seen Lipton until the production sessions with her husband. Jones and Lipton invited McCartney to dinner with Jackson after recording was finished, only for McCartney to somewhat ungraciously call Lipton "Mrs Jones" throughout. Mr Jones apparently remained courteous, but was said to be unimpressed afterwards. Jones and Lipton separated in 1986, eventually divorcing in 1990. Lipton had a second wave of acting fame as Norma Jennings, owner of the Double R Diner in *Twin Peaks*.



E A R L Y 1 9 8 0 s

WANNA BE STARTIN' SOMETHIN'

FIERCELY COMPETITIVE SINCE HE WAS A YOUNG BOY, MICHAEL REALISED A CHILDHOOD DREAM IN 1983 WHEN HE RELEASED THE BIGGEST-SELLING ALBUM OF ALL TIME. HOWEVER, BEHIND THE SEQUINS AND SPOTLIGHTS, THE SINGER DISCOVERED THAT CREATING A BLOCKBUSTER CAME WITH A PRICE...

M A R K L I N D O R E S







The Jacksons
announce their
Victory Tour on 30
November 1983

WHILE

which he presided over like a colossus, the Eighties got off to a shaky start for Michael. After the pizzazz and promise of his sublime disco opus *Off The Wall*, his musical coming-of-age, the confident funkster with the world at his loafer-clad feet began the decade with a step back.

He reverted back to being one fifth of The Jacksons for a new album and tour and found he was competing with himself in the charts, thanks to a hasty cash-in from his former record label Motown who capitalised in on his success by releasing *One Day In Your Life*, a compilation of his teen output, the title track of which gave him his first UK No. 1 hit.

Frustrated at not being able to continue down the musical route he had embarked on with his musical soulmate producer Quincy Jones on *Off The Wall*, Michael's anger was exacerbated at the 1980 Grammys Awards when he felt his accomplishments were severely overlooked. He won only one award and the "black" categories weren't even broadcast on TV, the transmission instead switching to local networks during that part of the show. Michael fumed backstage, feeling embarrassed and hurt. "This can never happen again," he told friends.

Bowing to pressure from his family and management, Michael agreed to follow *Off The Wall* with a new Jacksons record, though on his terms. He had grown, both musically and in terms of his confidence in his abilities, and wanted that to be reflected on The Jacksons' new material. He assumed complete artistic control over the album, introducing a funkier sound provided by many of the musicians from *Off The Wall*. Released in September 1980, *Triumph* went to No. 10 in the US album charts and produced a string of hits, including *Lovely One*, *Can You Feel It* and *Walk Right Now*, though its sales were a fraction of those of Michael's last effort, highlighting the fact that The Jacksons lacked the pulling power of Michael the solo artist.

it would come to be his defining decade and the period

It was Michael that was the major draw when the band embarked on their Triumph Tour in July of 1981. As the live representation of *Off The Wall* as well as *Triumph*, the tour was purely Michael's vision. Inspired by the lavish stage shows of acts such as Earth Wind & Fire, Michael designed the stage, costumes and choreography. Boasting a setlist split between Jacksons and Michael solo material, the three-month tour continued across the US, raking in \$5 million and was recorded and released as a live album, *Jacksons Live*, the following year.

Following the tour, Michael was feeling inspired and immediately begun working on new material – not only for his own next project, but also for other artists. A fan of a wide variety of different styles of music, he was a firm believer in experimentation and studied everything from rock to jazz to classical and wanted to broaden his own musical horizons by working with artists from different genres.

"I wouldn't be happy doing just one kind of music or labelling myself," he told *Creem* magazine in 1982. "I like doing something for everybody, I don't like my music to be labelled. Labels are like racism. I've got so many different compositions. I've been influenced by all kinds of different music – classical, R&B, folk, funk – and I guess all those ingredients combine to create what I have now."

In 1982 he wrote and produced a provocative paean to brawn called *Muscles* for Diana Ross, as well as working on new material with Freddie Mercury. He also sang backup on Kenny Rogers' *Goin' Back To Alabama* (as a favour to his friend Lionel Richie, who was producing Rogers' album) and later reunited with Paul McCartney to return the favour for Paul writing *Girlfriend* for *Off The Wall*.

The sessions with McCartney went particularly well, resulting in a pair of hit singles. *The Girl Is Mine* was kept by Michael as the first track for his next album, while a further two tracks, *Say Say Say* and *The Man*, were featured on McCartney's *Pipes Of Peace* album, the former also becoming a worldwide hit.

Work began in earnest on Michael's next album in August 1982. Holed up in Los Angeles' Westlake Studios, Michael and Quincy Jones were reunited

POP UP Michael's songwriting friendship with Paul McCartney, begun in the late '70s, would sour forever in 1985 when he took the Wings frontman's own financial advice – and bought a 50% stake in the Beatles catalogue



EARLY 1980s



EARLY 1980s



© Tex Features



The 14-minute film that accompanied *Thriller* cost half a million dollars

with the "dream team" that created *Off The Wall*. As well as sound engineer Bruce Swedien and songwriter Rod Temperton, musicians Greg Phillinganes, Louis Johnson, Paulinho Da Costa and Michael Boddicker were all back on board, having developed not only a musical shorthand (an integral quality, given the short timespan allocated to make the album), but also a working relationship the notoriously shy Michael felt comfortable with, putting him at ease in the studio.

"To me the most powerful records come from a collective creativity," Quincy Jones told *Billboard* magazine. "You have to be open to ideas – it's like being a film director. You get good records when you let all the people who work on it put their personality in their particular area. With people like Greg Phillinganes on piano, Jerry Hey on horns or Paul Humphreys or Ndugu Chanler on drums, you get a lot of feeling and soul from all the people involved. Everybody who was involved in that record had a hand in it. If someone had an idea, then we'd try it."

The tracks that Michael had written, *Billie Jean* and *Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'*, were the first to be finished and became the foundation of the album. "All the brilliance that had been building inside Michael Jackson for 25 years just erupted," says Quincy Jones. "It's as though he was suddenly transformed from this gifted young man into a dangerous predatory animal. I'd known Michael since he was 12 years old, but it was like seeing and hearing him for the first time. I was electrified, and so was everybody else involved in the project."

As well as Michael's compositions, Quincy had listened to over 800 tracks which had been submitted for consideration. "I listened to 800 songs, 'cause everybody kept saying Michael can't be any bigger. I said, you want to bet? I'm not going to let him make a bomb, you know," says Quincy. "At that time, I picked the songs and Michael recorded them. A lot

of the time during the recording of *Thriller*, Michael was on the road. He didn't even know what we were doing until it was time to do it. But it all worked out good. We did whatever we felt like doing. Nobody can ever predict that sort of success would happen. If they do, they're lying. Do what you love and what you believe in. I don't believe in surveys. If you make music that you don't believe in just because you think people will like it, you're doing it for the wrong reasons. For Michael and I, we did it until we both got goose bumps. And if we felt goose bumps from a song, we knew we were on the right path."

Already facing a tight deadline to finish the record, with a view to having it on shelves in time for the Christmas sales boom, they were dealt a further distraction when an opportunity from Hollywood royalty proved too good to refuse.

"We were in the middle of *Thriller* and Spielberg, who was like my brother, said 'I need you to do the whole *E.T.* album,'" Quincy recalls. "I said, Steven, we're right

in the middle of *Thriller*, man. So, anyway, Rod and the Bergmans – Alan and Marilyn Bergman – wrote a song for it called *Someone In The Dark*. Then he asked us if we'd do the whole album. We had to do that really in like less than a month, you know. And it was tough. But we did it."

The *E.T. The Extra Terrestrial* audiobook album was an impassioned labour of love for Michael. He had been obsessed with the movie and often visited the set during filming, claiming that he loved the story so much because he felt an affinity with the alien stranded on another planet. As well as recording the song, Michael read an abridged version of the story for an audiobook, which was to be pressed as a soundtrack album.

As had been the case when recording *She's Out Of My Life* for *Off The Wall*, Michael was overwhelmed by the emotion of the given material and was

"ALL THE BRILLIANCE THAT HAD BEEN BUILDING INSIDE MICHAEL JUST ERUPTED. IT WAS LIKE SEEING AND HEARING HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME"

POP_UP Michael spoke about the *E.T.* project to Interview magazine: "We all have the same emotions... who doesn't want to fly like Peter Pan, fly with some magic creature from outer space and be friends with him?"



THIS AIN'T NO TRUTH OR DARE

Key Recordings: 1980-1985

SAY SAY SAY

COLUMBIA/PARLOPHONE, 1983

After recording the McCartney-penned *Girlfriend* for *Off The Wall*, Beatles fan Michael contacted Paul to write together. Paul agreed, and Michael flew to McCartney's home to write and record a song together. The sessions were so successful that three songs were completed.

Say Say Say, their finest composition, was included on Paul's *Pipes Of Peace* album and was a hit in October 1983. Paul recently released a deluxe version of the album which included a remix of this song with his and Michael's vocals reversed.



THRILLER

EPIC, 1983

Having written *Off The Wall*'s title track and *Rock With You*, Quincy entrusted Rod Temperton to come up with the album's title track. In doing so, he created the whole aesthetic of the album. "Originally, when I did my *Thriller* demo, I called it *Starlight*," says Rod. "The next morning, I woke up, and I just said this word... Something in my head just said, 'this is the title'. You could visualise it on the top of the Billboard charts. You could see the merchandising for this one word, how it jumped off the page as 'Thriller'."



BEAT IT

EPIC, 1983

Wanting to incorporate a variety of genres to the album, *Beat It* was Michael's first rock song. "*Beat It* was really key to the record, with its power, with everything it has, because I said at the time, 'I need a song like The Knack's *My Sharona* – we need a black version,'" Quincy Jones said. "And Michael says, 'I got something here but I don't have any voices on it.' It was just what we needed. I decided to call Eddie Van Halen to come play the solo on *Beat It*."



BILLIE JEAN

EPIC, 1983

One of the first songs written for the album, *Billie Jean* was a source of conflict in the studio between Michael and Quincy. Michael wanted the song to have a longer intro so he could dance more when performing it.

Quincy Jones encouraged experimentation in the studio and *Billie Jean* is a product of such techniques, including placing the drums on a wooden platform eight inches off the floor for that unmistakable crisp sound, and singing through a five-foot long cardboard tube to achieve a specific vocal effect.



Michael – still recovering from burns suffered during a commercial shoot – is pictured with Brooke Shields, February 1984

unable to complete recording without breaking down. After repeated attempts at recording, Quincy decided it was meant to be that way and left Michael's voice breaking with emotion on the final recording.

"When I was doing that recording I really felt that I was E.T. and that's because his story was my life story in a lot of ways," Michael explained to *Ebony* magazine. "He's in a strange place and wants to be accepted and that's a position I've found myself in many times when travelling from city to city around the world. He's most comfortable around children, and I have a great love for kids. He gives love and wants love in return, which is me. And he has that super power which lets him lift off and fly when he wants to get away from things on earth and I can identify with that. We are alike in many ways."

Upon completion of the *E.T.* album, Michael and Quincy returned to work on *Thriller*, now vastly behind schedule. Quincy continued to plough through the submitted demos looking for the tracks which fit Michael's brief for the record, which was to ensure that most genres were covered. Still smarting at the Grammys snub for *Off The Wall*, Michael specified that he wanted his record to be inclusive to everyone – all thriller, no filler.

"Ever since I was a little boy, I would study composition," Michael said in his interview with *Ebony*. "And it was Tchaikovsky that influenced me the most. If you take an album like Nutcracker Suite, every song is a killer, every one. So I said to myself, 'Why can't there be a pop album where every song was good?' People used to do an album where you'd get one good song, and the rest were like B-sides. They'd call them 'album songs' – and I would say to myself, 'Why can't every one be like a hit song? Why can't every song be so great that people would want to buy it if you could release it as a single?' So I tried to strive for that. That was my purpose for the album. That was the whole idea. I wanted to just put any one out that we wanted. I worked hard for it."

With that in mind, a checklist was assembled. With Michael's compositions confirmed, Rod Temperton's tracks were next to be discussed. Having written *Off The Wall*'s title track and *Rock With You*, two of the

EARLY 1980s



E A R L Y 1 9 8 0 s

Jackson captured
onstage in 1980





Michael with lifelong friend Diana Ross

album's standout tracks, the English-born songwriter was a dead cert for contributing to the album. "I said to Rod, 'You gave me the title track to the last album, now do it again with this one!'" says Quincy.

Rod had an idea for a song inspired by old horror movies and rewrote a demo he had called *Starlight* into *Thriller*. In order to give the song the cinematic scope that the lyrics required, Bruce Cannon, a sound effects advisor who had worked on *The E.T. Storybook* album was called in to provide the howling werewolves, creaky door hinges and footsteps, while the latter half of the song lent itself to a spoken word verse from Vincent Price.

"I'd always envisioned this talking section at the end and didn't really know what we were going to do with it," said Rod Temperton. "But one thing I'd thought about was to have somebody, a famous voice, somebody known in the horror genre, to do this vocal. Quincy's then-wife, Peggy Lipton, knew Vincent Price so Quincy said to me, 'How about if we got Vincent Price?' And I said, 'Wow, that'd be amazing if we could get him...'"

As well as *Thriller*, Rod had written a sensual ballad called *The Lady In My Life* and an irresistible dance groove called *Baby Be Mine*. Both were included on the final tracklisting, along with *Human Nature*, a ballad written by Toto's Steve Porcaro with lyricist John Bettis; *P.Y.T.*, written by Quincy and James Ingram and featuring Michael's sisters Janet and LaToya on backing vocals; and *Beat It* – Michael's rock song, which featured a guitar solo from Eddie Van Halen.

By October 1983, the Paul McCartney duet *The Girl Is Mine* had been released as the album's first single and the pressure was on to finish the album. With the final tracklisting complete, each song was remixed, one song per day, to ensure it was as perfect as it could be.

"When we first began working properly on the record we had nine cuts," Rod Temperton said in an interview about the 25th Anniversary edition of *Thriller*. "And when we played the album back, some of the songs just didn't work and had to be replaced. It wasn't that they were bad songs, they just didn't fit in with the sequencing of the record."

As *The Girl Is Mine* was racing up the charts, a major hiccup arrived in the form of the *E.T. The Extra Terrestrial Storybook*. Epic had allowed Michael to take part in the project with two conditions: the first being that MCA Records didn't release the album until after *Thriller*, and the second being that *Someone In The Dark* was not released as a single.

MCA breached both conditions. They released the album on 7th November 1982, three weeks before *Thriller*. Also, releasing the album just as *The Girl Is Mine* was hitting its stride was regarded as a calculated move to mislead the general public into believing that track was on the *E.T.* album. They also serviced promo

copies of *Someone In The Dark* to radio, earning them a \$2 million lawsuit from Epic, who demanded they withdraw the album from sale.

Putting the *E.T.* debacle behind him, Michael released *Thriller* – the first album to be released simultaneously worldwide – on November 30th 1982. Though the record sold steadily over the Christmas period, its official launch began once Epic's unprecedented marketing campaign began in 1983.

The release of *Billie Jean* in January 1983 proved to be a true turning point in Michael's career. Having considered himself an entertainer, as opposed to a singer or musician, he was excited by the format of music video. Wanting to showcase his slick dance moves, Michael enlisted Steve Barron to direct the video, having been a big fan of Steve's video for The Human League's *Don't You Want Me*. He was convinced that pop music was becoming a more

POP UP According to Quincy Jones, Michael wrote *Billie Jean* about "a girl who had climbed over his wall, and he woke up and she was just laying by the pool in a bathing suit accusing him of being the father of one of her twins"





Jane Fonda presents
Jackson with his first
Triple Platinum awards
for *Thriller* in 1983

visual medium and wanted to be a part of pioneering that. "I used to look at MTV," Michael told *Jet* magazine. "My brother Jackie would say, 'Michael, you gotta see this channel. Oh, my God, it's the best idea. They show music 24 hours a day!' So I said, 'Let me see this.' And I'm watching it, I'm seeing all this stuff going on and saying 'If only they could give this stuff some more entertainment value, more story, a little more dance, I'm sure people would love it more.'"

Instilling this into his *Billie Jean* clip, Michael was confident it would stand out on the rock-based channel. "MTV said they don't play black artists," Michael recalled. "It broke my heart, but at the same time it lit something. I was saying to myself, 'I have to do something. I just refuse to be ignored.' So yeah, they said, 'We won't play *Billie Jean*'."

Epic were furious at the way Michael was being treated by the channel at the time and were forced to use heavy-handed tactics to get MTV's policy on black artists reversed. "I remember taking a red-eye to New

York and going to MTV with a rough cut of *Billie Jean* and MTV declining the video," recalls Ron Weisner, Michael's co-manager at the time. "I sat down with Walter Yetnikoff [head of CBS Records], and he told MTV, 'This video is on by the end of the day or CBS Records isn't doing business with MTV anymore.' The record company played hardball and that was the day that changed history. That was the video that broke the colour barrier."

The now iconic video in which paving stones light up as Michael dances on them (a modern take on King Midas) went on to become MTV's most-played clip, closely followed by *Beat It* – a grittier side of Michael which was intended as a statement on the gang warfare that was ruling the streets of Los Angeles at the time. CBS' Vice President of Promotion Frank Dileo (who went on to become Michael's manager in 1984) suggested releasing two

singles and videos concurrently in order to keep the momentum of the *Thriller* album going.

"Once they played it, it set the all-time record," Michael said. "Then they were asking me for EVERYTHING we had. They were knocking our door down. Then Prince came, it opened the door for Prince and all the other black artists."

As the new face of the video age, Michael had found a medium that enabled him to reach a wide audience as a performer in the way his idols – Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, James Brown and Jackie Wilson – had reached him. On March 25th 1983, he delivered what he called "the performance of my life" during Motown 25: Yesterday, Today, Forever, a celebration of the record label's 25th birthday. Performing *Billie Jean*, he donned his sequinned glove and trilby hat and debuted the Moonwalk before a global audience of well over 50 million people.

With *Billie Jean* topping the charts both in the UK and the US and *Beat It* also in the Top 10, the *Thriller*

album did likewise, beginning a record 37-week stint at the top of the US album chart. So confident that every track on the album was single-worthy, Epic had devised a strategy for the album in which singles were released every six to eight weeks, meaning that Michael always had at least one song in the Top 10. By the end of 1983, *Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'*, *P.Y.T.* and *Thriller* had all been Top 10 hits, as had *Say Say Say* – Michael's duet with Paul McCartney – and more Motown reissues, most notably *Farewell My Summer Love*, which reached No. 7. In the US, *Human Nature* was also a single taking his tally of Top 10 hits to a record seven in a calendar year.

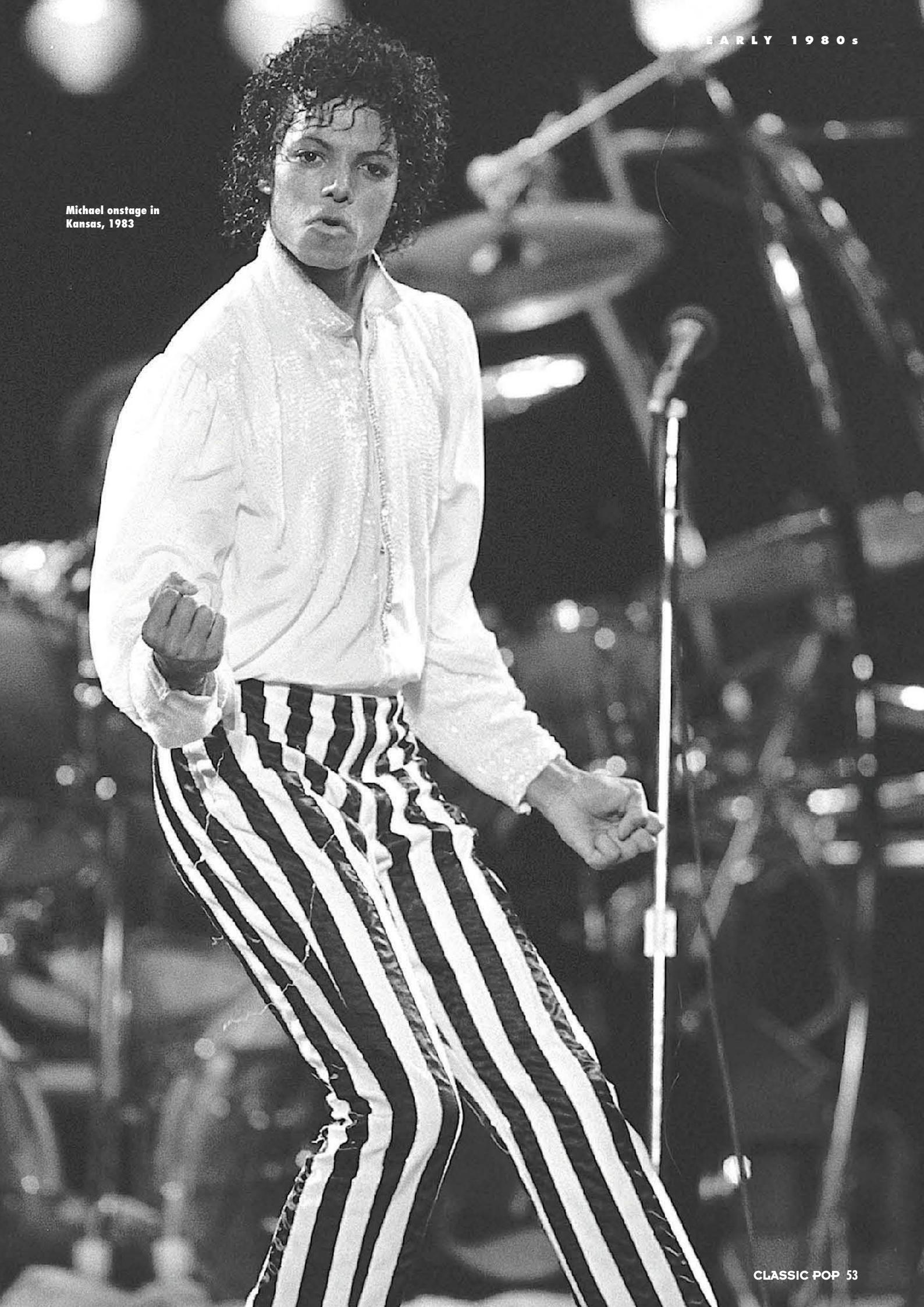
At its peak, *Thriller* was selling over a million copies each week and had proved to be a shot in the arm for the struggling record business. Shipments were down 50 million units between 1980 and 1982, CBS Records' own profits were down 50% and sales

POP UP The budget for the *Billie Jean* video was so tight that only 11 of the paving slabs could be rigged to light up, and Michael's brainwave of shop mannequins dancing into life had to be abandoned

"ONCE THEY PLAYED *THRILLER*, IT SET THE ALL-TIME RECORD. THEN PRINCE CAME, IT OPENED THE DOOR FOR PRINCE AND ALL THE OTHER BLACK ARTISTS"

EARLY 1980s

Michael onstage in
Kansas, 1983



E A R L Y 1 9 8 0 s



Michael wears a sequinned red leather jacket to the opening of the *Dream Girls* musical, Los Angeles, 1983



were down over 15% for the year. As a result, major company-wide layoffs occurred in August, on a day the company would remember as 'Black Friday'.

"On the first day we started *Thriller*, Quincy walked in followed by me and Michael and Rod Temperton and some of the other people," recalls sound engineer Bruce Swedien. "Quincy turned to us and he said, 'Okay guys, we're here to save the recording industry. Now that's a pretty big responsibility – but he meant what he said."

As soon as the album had slipped from the top spot, Michael began calling Walter Yetnikoff, often in the middle of the night, with suggestions of how to get the record back to No. 1. By now the king of MTV, Michael wanted to up the ante on his videos even further.

Enlisting Hollywood director John Landis, fresh from success with *An American Werewolf In London*, Michael envisioned *Thriller* as a short film rather than a video and devised a plot with a storyline that saw him transforming into a werewolf by incorporating state-of-the-art special effects and intricate choreography. Costing over \$500,000 to make, the clip was premiered worldwide on December 2nd 1983 on MTV before being released as a VHS with a making-of documentary. *The Making Of Michael Jackson's Thriller* was a huge money-spinner, selling over 10 million copies. It was the perfect ending to the most brilliantly executed album campaign in history.

While he had been snubbed at the Grammys in 1980 after *Off The Wall*, it was incomprehensible that, at a ceremony voted for by the record industry, a record that had almost singlehandedly revived said industry would not receive top honours. Michael and Quincy were rewarded for their remarkable achievements with a haul of eight awards – seven for *Thriller* and Best Children's Recording for *The E.T. Storybook*, which, as Michael said in his acceptance speech, meant the most to him out of all the awards.

While *Thriller* has established Michael Jackson as the biggest pop star in the world, his monumental success was not without its pitfalls. Away from the spotlight, he lived a hermit-like existence, battling with crippling shyness and self-esteem issues. The vitiligo that had started on his right hand (the reason he

MOTOWN 25

The show that launched a star

On March 25th 1983, the legendary Motown roster gathered in Pasadena, California to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the groundbreaking record label. Dressed in a sequinned jacket which belonged to his mother along with a trilby, single sequinned glove, half-mast trousers, jewel-encrusted socks and loafers, Michael delivered a show-stealing performance which transformed his career, catapulting him from former child star to pop megastar.

"I was at the studio editing *Beat It*, and for some reason I happened to be at Motown Studios doing it – I had long left the company," Michael told *Ebony* magazine. "They were getting ready to do something with the Motown 25th anniversary, and Berry Gordy came by and asked me did I want to do the show, and I told him no. I said no because the *Thriller* thing, I was building and creating something I was planning to do, and he said, 'But it's the anniversary...' So this is what I said to him. I said, 'I will do it, but the only way I'll do it is if you let me do one song that's not a Motown song.' He said, 'What is it?' I said, 'Billie Jean.' He said, 'OK, fine.' I said, 'You'll really let me do *Billie Jean*?' He said, 'Yeah.'"

Taking to the stage with his brothers for a Jackson 5 medley, Michael was left alone onstage lamenting "the good old days", before proclaiming that "most of all I like the new

songs", before launching into his latest hit single. Once the song reached the bridge, Michael launched into a dance break incorporating the world premiere of the Moonwalk, captivating the entire world.

Choreographed by Shalamar's Jeffrey Daniel, the move was already known among breakdancers, but Michael's performance made it his own, claiming it as his signature dance step.

"One of the things that touched me the most about doing that was, after I did the performance – I'll never forget. There was Marvin Gaye in the wings, and the Temptations and Smokey Robinson and my brothers, they were hugging me and kissing me and holding me. Richard Pryor walked over to me and said, in a quiet voice, 'Now that was the greatest performance I've ever seen.' These were people who, when I was a little boy in Indiana, I used to listen to. Marvin Gaye, The Temptations – to have them bestow that kind of appreciation on me, I was just honoured. Then the next day, Fred Astaire calls and said, 'I watched it last night, and I taped it, and I watched it again this morning. You're a hell of a mover. You put the audience on their ASS last night! That was my reward.'

Watched by an estimated 55 million people worldwide, in entertainment terms, the Motown 25 *Billie Jean* performance was every bit as significant as Neil Armstrong's own moon walk.





Michael and brother Randy are photographed by Andy Warhol

started wearing his trademark glove) was beginning to spread elsewhere on his body, and a nose job had marked the beginning of what would become a fascination with plastic surgery.

In a rare interview for a cover story for *Rolling Stone* magazine Michael complained of the devastating loneliness he felt, painting a particularly bleak picture of his life away from the spotlight. He claimed that his pet snake and llamas were his closest companions, revealed he talked to statues and mannequins in his home, and said he wandered the streets alone at night in pursuit of conversation only to find that people were unable to talk or relate to him "as they would a neighbour or an everyday person". A love life was also virtually nonexistent, with rumoured girlfriends Brooke Shields and Tatum O'Neal proving to be more companions than lovers.

He was also feeling increasingly isolated on account of the fact that he wasn't as close to his brothers as he once had been and was increasingly pressured to record

new material as a member of The Jacksons. Michael agreed to appear on the *Victory* album and had writing credits on three tracks, one of which, *State Of Shock*, was originally a planned duet with Freddie Mercury. As Freddie's schedule didn't permit him time to finish the song, his part was sung by Mick Jagger instead. Although it was talked-up as the reunion of all six Jackson brothers back together (Jermaine had left the group in 1975 and returned for the Motown 25 performance), the group could not have been more fragmented, with most tracks being solo tracks and duets under the Jacksons banner.

Despite the general unrest behind the scenes, a tour was announced, with Michael an unwilling participant. The tour was hit by negative press after promoter Don King concocted a venture to make more money on ticket sales by charging fans a fee to enter a lottery to be able to purchase tickets,

and then sold them in blocks of four. Michael was furious and announced a press conference in which he denounced the scheme and pledged all of his proceeds from the tour to charity. He was also unhappy that a decade-long sponsorship deal with Pepsi had been struck to help finance the tour and he would have to appear in ads for the soft drinks giant, despite following a strict healthy diet and never drinking it himself.

It was while filming one of those ads that an accident occurred that would have a profound effect on Michael's life. While filming a performance sequence, a firework exploded and set fire to Michael's hair, causing third degree burns to his scalp. He was rushed to the Cedars Sinai Hospital (he was photographed on a stretcher waving to fans with his trademark sequinned glove on as he was put in an ambulance), before being transferred for treatment at the Brotman Medical Centre – a specialist burns facility where he underwent a series of

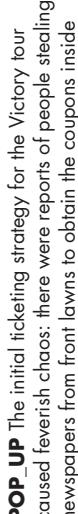
painful procedures including the painful ballooning technique. The accident had a catastrophic effect on Michael, not only in terms of his self-confidence, but also in that it marked the beginning of his alleged dependency on painkillers.

Upon his recovery, Michael returned to the Brotman hospital to donate the \$1.5 million compensation he received from Pepsi for the accident. He also went into the studio to contribute guest vocals to his childhood friend (and son of Motown founder Berry Gordy), Kennedy 'Rockwell' Gordy's debut single, *Somebody's Watching Me*. He also once again worked on various aspects of the *Victory Tour*, including offering his input to the staging, lighting, choreography and costume design.

Once underway, the five-month tour only served to magnify the tensions and acrimony between Michael and his brothers, with Michael travelling

POP UP The initial ticketing strategy for the *Victory* tour caused feverish chaos: there were reports of people stealing newspapers from front lawns to obtain the coupons inside

MICHAEL COMPLAINED OF THE DEVASTATING LONELINESS HE FELT, PAINTING A BLEAK PICTURE OF HIS LIFE AWAY FROM THE SPOTLIGHT



Michael and Brooke
en route to a party
after the Grammys
in 1984, in which he
won eight awards





Michael at an event with Donna Summer in 1982

to concerts on a private jet and staying in separate hotels from them, keeping interaction at a minimum. Despite the tour's name, the setlist contained no songs from the *Victory* album as Michael, according to Marlon Jackson, refused to rehearse or perform them. Instead, 60% of the tour setlist was made up of Michael's solo material – not surprising, considering he had just scored the biggest-selling album in history.

Despite the backstage tensions, the slick show was a hit with fans, who were treated to Michael's record-breaking hits live for the first time as well as some Jacksons classics. On top of that the show itself was a spectacle, combining a mammoth stage set, a huge lighting rig and dazzling costumes designed by celebrated costumier Bill Whitten, who Michael had worked closely with since he designed his military-inspired sequinned jacket for the Grammys earlier that year.

On the final night of the tour in Los Angeles, Michael announced to the sell-out crowd that they were witnessing his final show as part of The Jacksons, much to the shock of his brothers, who had hoped to take the *Victory Tour* to Europe. Michael had eclipsed the fame he had achieved with his brothers and was now regarded as the biggest pop star in the world, which is why he was the number one choice for a pair of activists who were keen to get him on board a project that would change the world.

After the show, Michael met with singer/songwriter and activist Harry Belafonte and Lionel Richie's manager Ken Krager, who were keen to produce a US version of Band Aid and asked Michael and Lionel if they would write a song, to be produced by Quincy Jones. Work commenced immediately in

Michael's home studio, and the result was *We Are The World*. Recorded on January 28th in a 10-hour recording session in Los Angeles after the American Music Awards, *We Are The World* was a surprisingly smooth-running project, given the magnitude of the stars involved. The single was mixed and released on March 7th 1985, eventually going on to sell in excess of 20 million copies and becoming one of the biggest-selling singles in history, raising over \$65 million which went towards famine aid in Africa and hunger projects in the US. Michael went on the record saying it was one of the achievements of which he was most proud, and that it was the blueprint for him setting up his own foundation and countless charitable endeavours.

By the mid-Eighties, Jackson had established himself as the biggest-selling artist in the world,

renowned for making records to break records. As he retreated into his Hayvenhurst Estate, far from the gaze of the public spotlight (with the exception of a rare trip to the UK in which he virtually shut down central London when he unveiled a waxwork of himself at Madame Tussauds), the notoriously competitive Michael was already hard at work on his next album – once again hoping to rule the world. His biggest problem would be how to accomplish that goal while fighting a growing compulsion to hide from it all. ■

MICHAEL HAD ECLIPSED THE FAME HE HAD ACHIEVED WITH HIS BROTHERS AND WAS NOW REGARDED AS THE BIGGEST POP STAR IN THE WORLD

POP UP Lionel Richie co-wrote *We Are The World* in Michael's bedroom, where Richie was startled by an enormous snake that had been hiding behind the records. "It took me two hours to calm my ass back down," he said



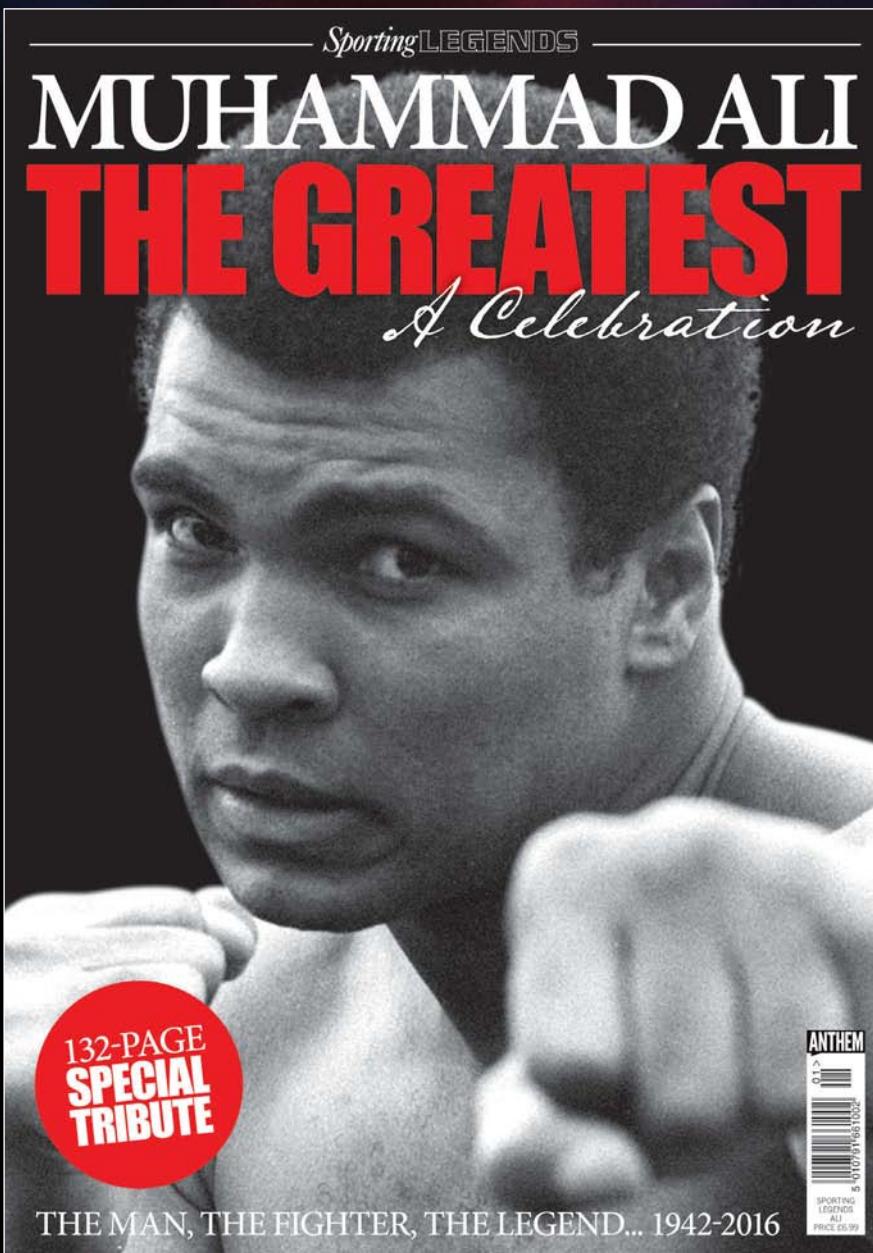
LISTEN UP!

Now hear our selection of Michael's best tracks from the early Eighties. Stream the playlist at: <http://spoti.fi/29yBNNm>



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JACKSON WITH...

FREDDIE MERCURY

MICHAEL JACKSON AND FREDDIE MERCURY WERE TWO OF THE GREATS OF THE 1980S. BUT THEIR COLLABORATION WOULD TAKE SOME 30 YEARS TO SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY...

DAVE STEINFELD

On the surface, they would appear to have had little in common. Michael Jackson was the second youngest son of a large, black, working-class family from Gary, Indiana – the heart of the American midwest; Freddie Mercury, by contrast, was half a generation older, the son of well-to-do parents, and a resident of the UK by way of Zanzibar and India. But dig a little deeper and the two had more in common than you might think.

For one thing, Michael and Freddie were both gifted singers and entertainers – two men who hearkened back to a time when you could be a pop star and an artist (these days, the two are all but mutually exclusive). They were both among the best and most flamboyant showmen in music but offstage both were known to be on the quiet side, with few close friends. They were both guarded about their sexuality, and both became enormously successful, known the world over.

It was back in 1983 that Michael Jackson and Freddie Mercury first got together to collaborate on a trio of songs: *There Must Be More To Life Than This*, *State Of Shock*, and *Victory*. But for various reasons, it would take more than 30 years for anything to actually be released. When they did finally surface

(and *Victory* never did), nearly two years ago now, the songs were hardly new; the two that did see the light of day had been released decades earlier in other versions. The sentimental ballad *There Must Be More To Life Than This* was in fact written all the way back in 1981, ostensibly for Queen's *Hot Space* album. It didn't make the cut – which is probably just as well considering that *Hot Space* was a foray into full-on dance-pop that got a lukewarm reception at best. But *There Must Be More...* did appear on Freddie's 1985 solo effort, *Mr Bad Guy*.

Queen guitarist Brian May and drummer Roger Taylor (bassist John Deacon went MIA years ago) found the old tracks and set to work restoring them in 2013. At the time, Taylor told *Classic Rock* magazine, "They've been hanging around for years and years and Michael's estate haven't really been able to make their mind up about what to do with them. So we suggested we finish them and see. They're pretty good; one of them is great." The resulting reworked track – now a duet with Michael – was included on the double-disc compilation *Queen Forever*, which arrived in November 2014.

Taylor and May enlisted noted producer and remix specialist William Orbit to put the finishing touches on this new version of *There Must Be More*. The result

was an even more dramatic version of a song that was already pretty dramatic. In a statement in 2014, Orbit said, "Hearing Michael Jackson's vocals was stirring. So vivid, so cool and poignant, it was like he was in the studio singing live. With Freddie's vocal solo on the mixing desk, my appreciation for his gift was taken to an even higher level."

In the new version, which is only three minutes in length, Freddie and Michael trade lines against an almost church-like musical backdrop, and there is a very Queen-esque synth string break about two thirds of the way through the song. But in contrast to the dramatic arrangement, the message and lyric is pretty simple: "There must be more to life than killing/ A better way for us to survive/ Why should it be just a case of black or white/ There must be more to life than this". *There Must Be More* is essentially a plea for tolerance and peace. Michael's voice definitely provides added meaning to lines like, "Why should it be just a case of black or white" – even if that line was actually written by Freddie.

In contrast, *State Of Shock* – the other song that was unveiled in 2014, via YouTube – is not a message song at all but a guitar-based riff-rocker with ultra-simple lyrics that runs nearly five minutes in length. Not all songs have to be deep, however, and whatever *State Of Shock* may lack in gravitas it makes up for with groove. Michael's rendition with Freddie doesn't differ all that significantly from the version that he and Mick Jagger scored a hit with in 1984. The song made it to No. 14 in the UK and all the way to No. 3 Stateside and was also included on The Jacksons' *Victory* album. In a 1984 interview, Freddie explained that though they started recording all three songs in 1983, scheduling conflicts made it difficult for them to complete them. Michael apparently wanted to get *State Of Shock* out and in fact asked Freddie (who was recording in Munich at the time) if he would be okay with Jagger singing his part on the duet. "Fine," was Freddie's response. "A song's a song. As long as our friendship carries on, we can write all kinds of songs."

Some people say that scheduling conflicts weren't the only reason the songs weren't finished, however. Bubbles, Michael's chimpanzee and best friend, may have also played a part in the delay. In 2014, the *Daily Mail* reported that Freddie didn't exactly warm to Bubbles being in the studio at all times. Writer David Wigg, who was a friend of the Queen frontman, said, "Freddie got very angry because Michael made Bubbles sit between them and would turn to the chimp between takes and ask, 'Don't you think that was lovely?' or, 'Do you think we should do that again?' After a few days of this, Freddie just exploded. He phoned his manager and told him to 'Get me out of this zoo'."

Indeed, Freddie's manager Jim 'Miami' Beach told *NME* that Michael even brought a llama into the studio at one point. "Mercury rang me and said, 'Miami, dear, can you get over here? You've got to get me out of here; I'm recording with a llama,'" said Beach.

Some of the best memories of Michael and Freddie's work together were provided by Peter Freestone, the latter's former personal assistant and author of the 2001 biography *Freddie Mercury*. Freestone says they met for the first time in 1980 – a banner year for both musicians – when Michael showed up to see Queen perform in Los Angeles

and was blown away. They kept in touch and a few years later, Michael invited Freddie to his Encino, California house for work and play.

As Freestone recalls, "We arrived at the house, having passed a security tower at the gate. We got out of the car at a mock Tudor mansion, bricks at the lower level, white stucco and wooden beams above. Michael came to greet us with a big smile, obviously proud of his house. Before we could go in, he insisted we accompany him on a tour. I'll never forget Freddie Mercury walking through mud, wearing white jeans and white tennis shoes, talking to llamas! We were shown all the animals and taken down to a pond where Michael had swans. Michael had a real love for these animals and birds; they were part of 'his family', as Freddie's friends were part of his."

Freestone also remembers their work together in Michael's studio. "The work comprised of a Michael track, *State Of Shock*, which only needed another vocal, which Freddie happily provided," he writes. "The next was a Freddie piece he was just working on at this time [this being *There Must Be More To Life Than This*]. Freddie sat at the piano and let Michael try the singing. Where there were no words written Freddie told Michael to ad-lib, which he did with words about love... Work was started on a third track with a working title *Victory* [but] there was only one technician in the studio [and] there were no instruments set up and no musicians."

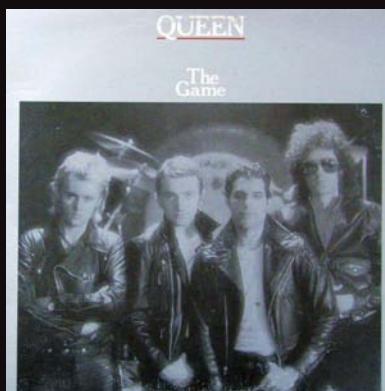
He adds, "The studio was a place of work for both Freddie and Michael, but watching them you could also imagine two children in a play room. Both of them would throw their hands in the air and burst out laughing when either of them made a mistake – but it really was a serious business too. Thinking back now to this time watching these two masters of their craft together in one place putting this music together gives me goose bumps."

LITTLE WONDER

KING AND QUEEN OF THE DECADE

The year 1980 was a landmark year for both Michael Jackson and Freddie Mercury. Although Michael unveiled his breakthrough album *Off The Wall* during the latter half of 1979, it truly caught fire in the new decade. The album, which was co-produced by Quincy Jones, established Michael as a solo artist in his own right. He was no longer a little boy, no longer just a member of The Jackson 5. *Off The Wall* produced four top 10 smashes – *Don't Stop Til You Get Enough*, *Rock With You*, *She's Out Of My Life* and the title track – and was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2008.

Similarly, the 1980s began on a high note for Queen. That summer, they released *The Game*, which also spun off a series of singles that showcased the writing of various members of the band. Though drastically different stylistically, Freddie Mercury's rockabilly rave-up *Crazy Little Thing Called Love*, Brian May's dramatic ballad *Save Me* and John Deacon's pop-disco concoction *Another One Bites The Dust* – which sported a memorable bass line heavily inspired by Chic's *Good Times* – all became big hits.





L A T E 1 9 8 0 s

WHO'S
BETTER



HAVING ACHIEVED SUCCESS
AND WEALTH BEYOND HIS
WILDEST DREAMS, BY 1985
THE THRILL WAS GONE AND
MICHAEL WAS FORCED TO
COMPETE WITH A NEW
CROP OF POP SUPERSTARS
– THOUGH ULTIMATELY HIS
GREATEST COMPETITION
CAME FROM THE MAN IN
THE MIRROR...

M A R K L I N D O R E S



HAVING

dominated the music world by creating the biggest-selling album in history, Michael Jackson was to discover that unrivalled success and wealth brought a whole other set of problems. By the time he began work on the follow-up to *Thriller*, the pop landscape was vastly different to what it had been last time round, and following his own meteoric success, he had inadvertently created the biggest challenge he had ever faced.

As a groundbreaking artist in the formative years of MTV, he had played a huge role in creating the blueprint for the modern day pop megastars that ruled the decade. By the time he began laying the groundwork for *Bad* in late 1985, the art of the pop blockbuster album had been perfected by a host of acts such as Madonna, Prince, Bruce Springsteen and Whitney Houston – all of whom had produced multi-million selling albums each spawning a string of hit singles with their own iconic videographies.

By the end of 1985, Michael was beginning to feel the heat from his pop peers and began sowing the seeds of an album which he intended to usurp them all, an album which, he constantly reminded himself (by writing the number on every mirror in his home) he wanted to sell over 100 million copies of. It had been three years since *Thriller* was released and, in the intervening years, he had focused on the enormous wealth that album had brought him. The album had earned him millions of dollars and Michael sought the help of a team of business managers, headed by attorney John Branca, to help ensure he invest the money wisely.

Back in 1982, while recording with Paul McCartney, Michael expressed an interest in music publishing after the former Beatle had acquired a repertoire of titles including Buddy Holly's catalogue and a vast selection of Broadway musicals.

"While we were working together he took me aside and said he'd like some advice, and as I was quite a bit older than him I felt big brotherly so I said to him, from a business perspective, you should look at

music publishing," Paul McCartney told the BBC in an interview in 1989. "It does very well and it's a rewarding business for a musician to be in because it's music – it's what we do, it's songs."

"Then a couple of weeks later we were chatting and he said, 'I'm gonna buy your songs'. And I just brushed it off. Then a week later he said it again, and I just thought he was kidding. Then a couple of weeks later someone rang me up and told me he'd bought Northern Songs."

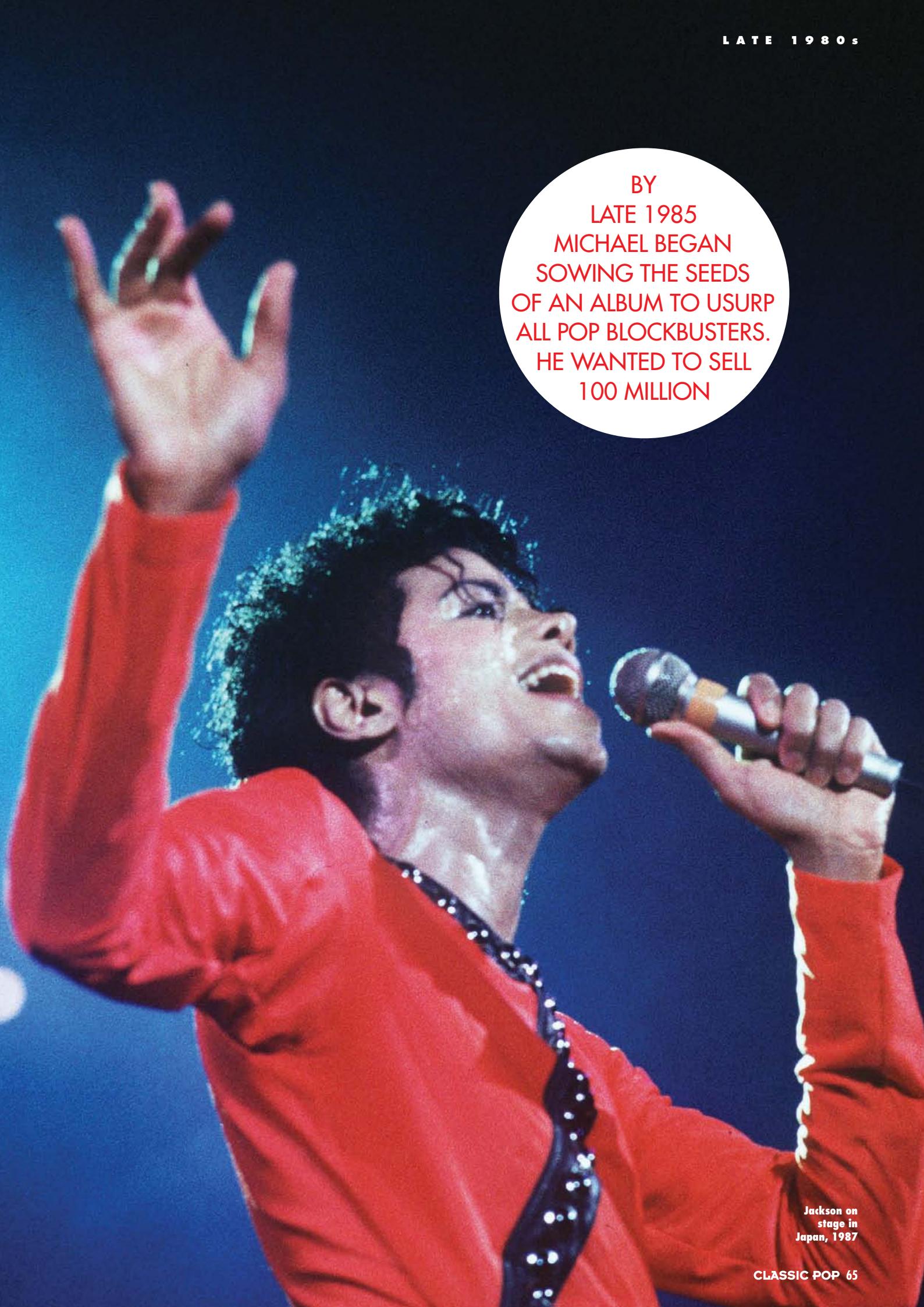
Although it was a clever business move, Michael's purchase of the ATV Music Publishing catalogue in 1985 for \$47 million was the trigger for a vitriolic backlash against him, with the press inaccurately reporting that Michael had used underhand tactics to buy the rights over Paul. In actual fact, Michael had ensured that both Paul and Yoko Ono weren't planning on buying the publishing rights before he began bidding on them. The purchase helped make Michael one of the most powerful figures in the entertainment business, and certainly the most powerful African-American figure, something which was still a bone of contention with industry heavyweights at that time.

"When we announced the acquisition of The Beatles catalogue, there seemed to be a feeling that Michael didn't have the right to be a savvy businessman," Michael's attorney John Branca told Spike Lee for the *Bad 25* documentary. "It was a misconception that Michael went behind Paul McCartney's back to bid on the catalogue. That was absolutely not the case." John's comments were supported by McCartney, who said that his problem was not with Michael buying the ownership to The Beatles' songs, but with the way he used them.

"He bought that company, which was up for sale, there's nothing wrong with that, but there are a lot of things I don't like about the way he runs the company," Paul said. "It's the commerciality of the songs that I don't like. The Beatles turned down a lot of lucrative offers from soft drinks companies etcetera to use our songs because we felt that our songs

POP UP In 1995, Jackson merged his music catalogue with Sony for a reported £59 million, retaining half ownership. In 2006, it's believed his share went down to 25% after borrowing £186 million from the deal



A dynamic photograph of Michael Jackson performing on stage. He is captured mid-song, looking upwards with his mouth open as if singing. He wears a vibrant red zip-up jacket over a black shirt with white studs. His right arm is raised high, and his left hand holds a silver microphone. The background is dark, suggesting a concert setting.

BY
LATE 1985
MICHAEL BEGAN
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100 MILLION

Jackson on
stage in
Japan, 1987

LATE 1980s



Michael at Madison Square Garden on the Bad Tour, March 5 1988



meant something to people and when they get used commercially like that it spoils them – and that's what's happening now, *Revolution* was used by Nike to sell sneakers, Panasonic is *All You Need Is Love* and *Good Day Sunshine* is Oreo cookies these days. That's what I'm not too wild about."

The fact that Michael was seen to be cheapening the legacy of The Beatles was just another factor for the vicious backlash that Michael was at the centre of at the time. Despite making him more wealthy than he could ever have imagined, *Thriller* had become an album-come-albatross, delivering an unbelievable amount of pressure on Michael to follow it up, and bringing him a level of fame that had left him feeling more trapped and isolated than ever before, forcing him to lead a hermit-like existence on his California ranch.

He had become an untouchable figure and risked alienating his fanbase, who were patiently waiting for new material, but were only getting the occasional glimpse of an idol they were finding increasingly unfamiliar, as he was spotted either wearing elaborate disguises or with his face covered by a surgical mask as he left stores, cinemas and theme parks, all of which he had open specifically for him to ensure he wasn't bothered by over-excited fans, an experience he found increasingly traumatic.

"Wherever I go I disguise myself, now," Michael admitted to interviewer Molly Meldrum. "People really go crazy. They're very happy to see you. They feel as if they know you. You have to respond back to them like you know them."

"They feel they personally know you," he added. "My picture's on their walls, you know, my music is playing in their house, so they grab you and they hug

you and they touch you and sometimes it just gets crazy and out of control."

Michael's desire for privacy was such that he announced that he imposed a ban on press interviews after claiming to have had his words taken out of context in the past and been misquoted, leading to a deep mistrust of the media. However, the decision to withdraw from public life and his refusal to do any press interviews backfired in a grand fashion.

Instead of enabling him to take control of his public image, as he had thought, his quirks and eccentricities were amplified and exaggerated by a media eager to feed the voracious appetite of its scandal-hungry readership. Desperate for information about the reclusive superstar, the press, abiding by the tried-and-tested tabloid rule of never letting facts (or lack of) get in the way of a good story, if Michael wasn't going to tell his story, they would make one up, painting him as a reclusive oddball with little grasp of reality.

Dubbing him "Wacko Jacko", they went to town on him reporting sensationalist headlines including rumours of Michael having a shrine to Elizabeth Taylor in his home, living with a menagerie of animals, sleeping in a hyperbaric chamber, trying to buy the bones of the Elephant Man and developing an addiction to plastic surgery.

Michael himself was not blame-free for the image the tabloids had created of him. He had occasionally been known to feed stories to the press which purported him to be slightly eccentric, but his refusal to co-operate with the media granted them license to print whatever stories they liked, however detrimental.

Any official word from the Jackson camp now came via his new, cigar-smoking manager/minder,

**"WHEREVER
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CONTROL"**

POP UP Jackson's manager from 1984 to 1989, Frank Dileo, was an experienced record exec who also had roles in five movies including *Wayne's World*, *Goodfellas* and Michael's *Moonwalker*



WHO'S



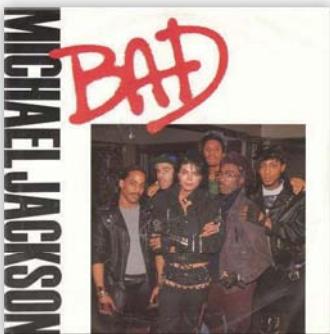
THE WORD IS OUT

Key Recordings: 1987-1989

BAD

EPIC, 1987

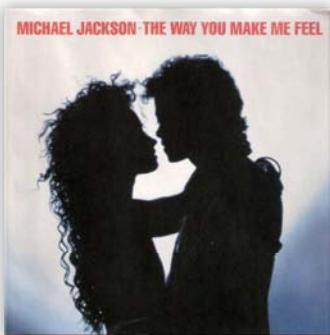
Bad was written by Michael as a possible face-off between himself and Prince: the pair harboured an intense rivalry throughout the Eighties. A meeting at which they were both present took place to discuss the duet, though little discussion actually took place. In 1993, Prince claimed in an interview that his mind was made up as soon as he saw the first line of the song, "Your butt is mine". "I wasn't singing that to him, and he sure as hell wasn't singing it to me," he said.



THE WAY YOU MAKE ME FEEL

EPIC, 1987

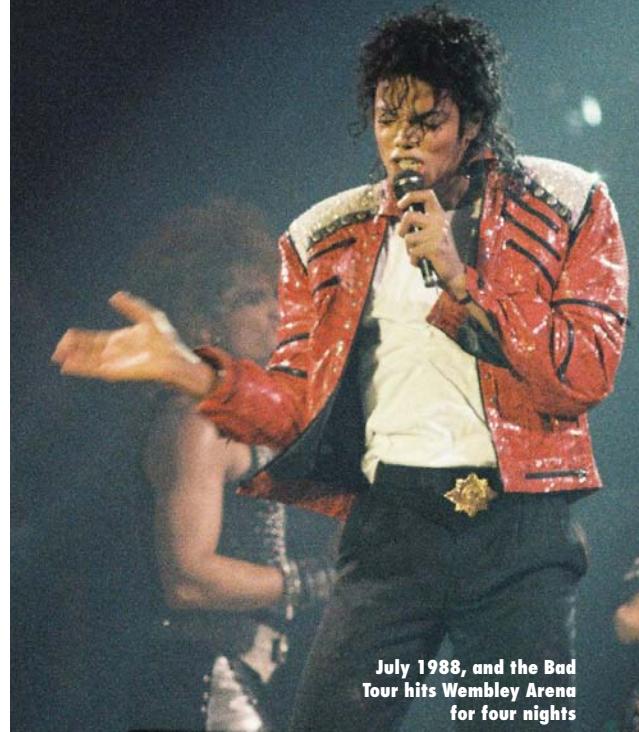
An infectious groove, *The Way You Make Me Feel* was written at the request of Michael's mother Katherine who said he had never recorded anything based on a shuffle rhythm. Complete with Michael's trademark whoops and yelps, it remains one of his most exhilarating and feel-good songs. He performed the song at the 1988 Grammys along with *Man In The Mirror*, together with an astounding dance performance in which he recreated the video complete with the original dancers.



MAN IN THE MIRROR

EPIC, 1988

After *We Are The World* had given Michael a taste for big, anthemic ballads with a social message, he shelved the song he had earmarked for *Bad* when he heard this emotional masterpiece written by his *I Just Can't Stop Loving You* duet partner Siedah Garrett and Glenn Ballard. Yet another US No. 1, the song unbelievably only reached No. 21 in the UK singles chart upon release, only hitting its No. 2 peak in 2009 after Michael's death.



July 1988, and the Bad Tour hits Wembley Arena for four nights

Frank Dileo, whose relationship with Michael through these years bore a strong resemblance to that of Colonel Tom Parker and Elvis Presley. Dileo later shot down the rumours during a live satellite link-up to the Terry Wogan show from Wembley Stadium in 1988 to promote the Bad Tour.

"I know those stories hurt Michael and they hurt me," he said. "They are completely untrue and are only around because Michael has refused to speak to these publications. It's disgusting what lies they can get away with printing."

As well as the mauling Michael was getting in the press everyday, he was also deeply unhappy at home. His relationship with his father and brothers was still acrimonious following Michael's refusal to continue the Victory Tour to Europe and he had angered the Jehovah's Witnesses with the *Thriller* video, losing a support network he had relied on heavily in the past.

As the madness swirled, Michael was ensconced in his California estate channelling his anger and frustration into songs for his next album. Feeling the pressure living up to the blockbuster behemoth that was *Thriller*, Michael was understandably daunted at the prospect of following it up.

"I remember being in Hong Kong with Michael after *Thriller* and I said to him, 'You know, Michael, there's a lot of pressure, maybe you should think about doing a covers album of songs that inspired you – people like Jackie Wilson or James Brown,'" John Branca says. "'Just go a little left of centre so you don't feel like you have to compete with yourself...' and Michael looked at me like I was from Mars, because he thrived on that pressure. He thrived on pushing himself... and everyone around him."

Michael wrote over 60 songs for the album on the advice of Quincy Jones, who had suggested Michael take control of writing the songs, having been shocked by the progression in Michael's songwriting in the interim years, since the *Thriller* sessions.

"By the time we started work on the record, Michael had been in the studio working out ideas and stuff and had hundreds of tapes," Quincy said. "I said to him to write all of the tunes this time because I —

L A T E 1 9 8 0 s

The Bad Tour reaches the
Meadowlands Arena in New
Jersey in October 1988



LATE 1980s





Above: Los Angeles, November 13. Opposite page: Madison Square Garden, March 1

could see him growing – both as a songwriter and in his understanding of production. He wrote two and half songs on *Off The Wall*, four on *Thriller*. And when it came to doing *Bad*, I told him it's time to go against all the publicity and walk into the eye of the fire and tell the truth about everything. He eventually wrote nine songs for *Bad* and five of those went on to be No. 1 records."

However, just as Michael was finding his groove with the new material, a distraction arose in the form of an offer from the Disney Corporation, who were working with Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas to create a state-of-the-art 3D film to be shown exclusively in the Disneyland/World theme parks and wanted Michael to star in it.

A huge fan of Disney and *Star Wars*, Michael jumped at the chance and agreed to star in the film and perform two new songs. As with the *ET Storybook* project, which coincided with *Thriller*, Michael was allowed to take part on the condition the songs weren't released as singles before Michael's new album. The film, *Captain EO*, with Michael in the starring role, lasted only 17 minutes but, with a cost of over \$20 million, it was the most expensive time-to-money film in history. As well as the film, Michael was a consultant on a ride for the theme parks based on the film.

After shooting finished, Michael was back in popstar mode. He and Quincy set up camp once again in California's Westlake Studios, the creative hub where *Off The Wall* and *Thriller* were both recorded. Initial suggestions suggested that their old magic was still very much in evidence.

"Working with Quincy again was such a wonderful thing," Michael said. "He lets you experiment, do

your thing, and he's genius enough to stay out of the way of the music, and if there's an element to be added, he'll add it. And he hears these little things. Like, for instance, I'll come up with this bass lick, and the melody, and the whole composition. But in listening, he'll add something, a nice riff or something to make it complete."

Unlike previous instances, with the material written in-house, Quincy didn't need to wade through thousands of songs which were submitted to the album as Michael had written everything.

"With *Thriller* we would work on a track and then we'd meet at his house, play what we worked on, and he would say, 'Let it talk to you.' I'd go, 'OK...' He'd say, 'If the song needs something, it'll tell you. Let it talk to you.'"

Michael said, "With this album I've learned to do that. The key to being a wonderful writer is not to write. You just get out of the way... 'Leave room for God to walk in the room'. I don't take credit for anything. I wake up from dreams and go 'Wow, put this down on paper.' The whole thing is strange. You

hear the words, everything is right there in front of your face. And you say to yourself, 'I'm sorry, I just

didn't write this. It's there already.' I feel that somewhere, someplace, it's been done and I'm just a courier bringing it into the world. I do believe that."

Among the first batch of songs completed for the album were *Another Part Of Me*, which was featured in the *Captain EO* film; *I Just Can't Stop Loving You*, which Michael intended as a duet with Whitney Houston; and *Smooth Criminal*, which Michael had envisioned to be the album's title track and first single. However, record company president Walter Yetnikoff, who was devising a meticulous release strategy

"WORKING WITH QUINCY AGAIN WAS A WONDERFUL THING. HE'S GENIUS ENOUGH TO STAY OUT OF THE WAY OF THE MUSIC"

POP UP Disney's *Captain EO* movie is regarded as one of the first "4D" films – a 3D movie which also uses theatre effects such as smoke and lasers, synchronised with the frames of the film



WHO'S
BAD



THE SOUND OF A CRESCENDO

Key Recordings: 1988-1989

DIRTY DIANA

EPIC, 1988

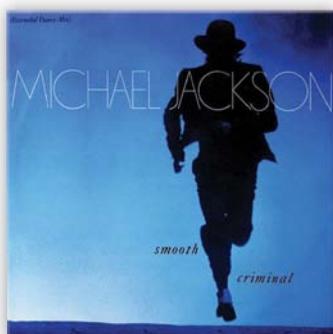
After flirting with rock on *Beat It*, Michael decided to go even further down that route, eschewing the former's dance beat and going full-on rock complete with screaming guitar solo courtesy of Billy Idol's guitarist Steve Stevens, for the tale of a professional groupie. During his UK leg of the Bad Tour, Michael dropped the song from the set for his third Wembley gig out of respect for Princess Diana, who was seated in the audience that night with Prince Charles.



SMOOTH CRIMINAL

EPIC, 1988

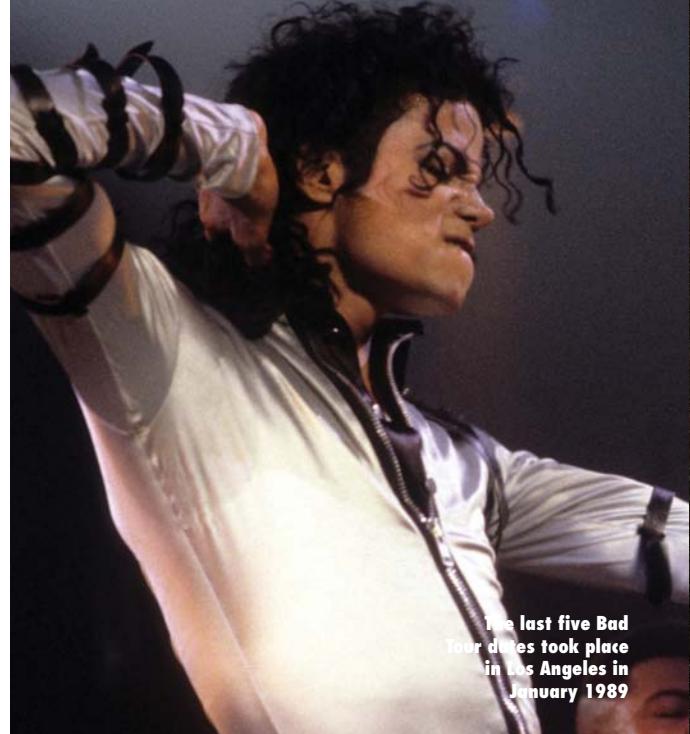
Opening with a Synclavier sample of Michael's heartbeat, the tension of the song is palpable from the outset, before breaking into an aggressive rock/R&B hybrid, with a menacing vocal which was worlds apart from the boy-next-door pop which people were expecting. This was one of the first songs Michael wrote for the *Bad* album; Quincy Jones was not a fan of the song and tried to dissuade Michael from including it on the album, to no avail.



LEAVE ME ALONE

EPIC, 1989

Taking its name from a key scene in *The Elephant Man*, *Leave Me Alone* was the first time Michael addressed the press' constant scrutiny of his life and how hurtful he found it – a subject he would explore further on record later on *Why You Wanna Trip On Me*, *Scream* and *Tabloid Junkie*. One of the strongest songs on the album, the song was only available on the CD version of *Bad* until it was released as the eighth single in February 1989.



The last five Bad Tour dates took place in Los Angeles in January 1989

for the album, refused to allow that title due to the negative connotations it conjured up.

With the music business pervaded by a sense of seriousness post-Live Aid and the advent of rap making its mark in mainstream culture, a brief to give Michael "a tough sound and a tough image" resulted in *Bad* being chosen as the new title track. The song was written by Michael as a riposte to his critics, and Quincy Jones orchestrated a meeting between Michael and arch-rival Prince with a view to recording the song as a duet. A fractious meeting with muted responses and awkward glances ensued before Prince declined the offer, telling Michael "the song will be a hit without me on it".

The Prince duet wasn't the only planned collaboration for *Bad* to fall through. Whitney Houston was due to sing *I Just Can't Stop Loving You* with Michael but as *Bad* had fallen behind schedule and was now due out in the summer of 1987 instead of January as originally planned, it would now clash with the release of Whitney's own second album, so Arista boss Clive Davis vetoed the idea to keep Whitney exclusive and prevent her being overexposed. Also, studio time with Run DMC to create an anti-crack track came to nothing.

It wasn't just aesthetically that Michael was to toughen up, it was also sonically. Michael's songwriting embodied the frustration, anger and pain he felt at the hands of his family and at the press and with an expanded vocal range due to work with vocal coach Seth Riggs, he was able to convey those emotions. His voice had changed to include a more raspy and bluesy quality, perfect for both rocky moments such as *Dirty Diana*, the deeper, more sinister-sounding *Speed Demon*, the uplifting gospel anthem *Man In The Mirror* and the album's angriest moment, *Leave Me Alone*, a song which was included as a bonus track on the CD version of the album. It was also these blues and gospel inflections that led to one of Michael's vocal trademarks – pronouncing *Come On* as "Shamone" in tribute to gospel legend Mavis Staples.

Already behind schedule, Michael once again left the album recording to shoot an extended video

LATE 1980s



LATE 1980s



Michael at Meadowlands
performing *This Place Hotel*,
the only Jacksons song used
on both tour legs



Wembley Arena,
July 3 1988

for *Smooth Criminal* in February 1987. After the process had eaten up two months of studio time (the video became Michael's feature film *Moonwalker*), Quincy summoned Michael back to the studio to finish the album. It had already been delayed from January to August and couldn't possibly be postponed any further, as the Bad World Tour was scheduled to kick off in September.

With over 30 complete songs to choose from, Michael and Quincy sat down to decide on *Bad's* final tracklist – a process which highlighted the differences in Michael and Quincy's eventual vision for the album.

"We had 33 songs and it was time to cut it down to the final tracklist," Quincy says. "The relationship with a producer and an artist is really special. And there's no room for BS at all. It's got to be pure. It's got to be love and respect and amazing mutual respect for each other because that's what makes a good record. When they trust each other, and you tell them to jump without a net, boy, you better know what you're talking about."

In the end, the result was the album Michael had envisaged. Using the latest studio technology, most notably the Synclavier sound system which was utilised extensively on the album, giving it a hi-tech, polished sound. "I think *Bad* is the most definitive expression of Michael's craft," says Greg Phillinganes, Michael's longstanding keyboard player. "*Bad* showed off his solo artistry because Michael was more involved production-wise and songwriting-wise. Yes, he worked with Quincy, but it was not quite as much as *Off The Wall* and *Thriller*. You saw the transition of Michael becoming more of a solo force behind the scenes and away from the Jacksons."

As he had done with *The Girl Is Mine* and *Thriller*, Michael launched *Bad* with a ballad, this time *I Just Can't Stop Loving You*, recorded as a duet with Siedah Garrett in July 1987. A gentle testing-of-the-waters before the onslaught of the *Bad* single, album and video, the song hit No. 1 around the world, despite a lukewarm critical reception.

Bad was unleashed on August 31st with a TV special, *Michael Jackson: The Magic Returns*,

BAD OR MAD?

The nickname that went too far

From early on in his career Michael was regarded as an eccentric, even though the claims were largely baseless and founded on the fact that he was cripplingly shy and soft-spoken.

However, as his fame reached a level that rendered it virtually impossible to lead any semblance of a normal life, Michael's withdrawal from the public eye only served to accentuate his eccentricities and stories began to surface in the tabloid press on an almost daily basis painting him as a reclusive figure, with little grasp on the real world.

The stories had begun in earnest in the early Eighties when Michael fanned the flames of the press' construction of the fictional figure dubbed "Wacko Jacko", when the Jackson camp deliberately fed stories to the press or manipulated situations with the intent of enhancing Michael's strange persona, seeing it as a PR coup that he was landing on the front pages with minimum effort.

However, the game took a sinister twist as, annoyed that Michael had refused to give interviews or speak to the press to refute stories, the tabloid press tried to goad him into doing just that by making the stories more sensationalist and bizarre.

After Michael posed in a hyperbaric chamber in the burns centre of the hospital that treated

him after he was burned during the filming of a Pepsi ad, the story became that he slept in it every night believing it would enable him to live to be 150 years old. That image opened the floodgates of the weird and wonderful tales of "Wacko Jacko".

He was said to have tried to buy the remains of real-life Elephant Man, Joseph Merrick, had a shrine to Elizabeth Taylor in his home, was constantly having more and more plastic surgery in a bid to look like Diana Ross, had adopted Bubbles the Chimpanzee as his substitute child, ate flowers, believed he was Peter Pan, and so on, with Michael's silence on the subject only seeming to give credence to the stories.

While doubtless very hurtful, these stories paled into insignificance when Michael's treatment at the hands of the press became merciless and inhuman following the child abuse allegations, with Michael likening his fame to "being in a prison".

"I'm not a wacko," he said. "That came from the English tabloids. Don't call me Wacko Jacko, I'm a human being and I have feelings and it hurts me when they say that. Stop it."

In 1988, he attempted to set the record straight about the tabloid rumours, his childhood and his relationships with the publication of his autobiography *Moonwalk*.





during which the full 18-minute short film of *Bad*, directed by Martin Scorsese, was premiered following a short montage of Michael's previous videos and news footage of Michaelmania. The video became a global talking point, not only due to its mesmeric storyline and its superb choreography, but also for Michael's increasingly altered appearance due to plastic surgery. With his noticeably thinner nose, reshaped chin and lighter skin tone (later revealed as make-up to hide his vitiligo), it was talked about around the world in the same way that *Thriller* was.

Michael's look from the video was carried over to become the album cover, which was shot on the set of the video after the original planned cover – a close-up of Michael's heavily made-up face shot through a sheet of lace to give the illusion of wearing a veil – was rejected by the record company due to it being completely at odds with the otherwise tough, street image projected for the project.

Michael's original *Bad* outfit, bedecked with buckles and straps, was bought off the peg in a biker store on Hollywood's Melrose Avenue but the weight and toughness of the fabric proved limiting and inhibited Michael's dancing, so subsequent variations of the look (specifically for the tour) were specially designed and made by Michael's own tailor, Michael Bush, to accommodate his movement.

With the world eagerly anticipating what a Michael Jackson album would sound like five years after *Thriller* and the most hyped album launch in history, the album's release proved to be as remarkable as expected. Debuting at No. 1 around the world, *Bad* would go on to join its predecessor in the history books. Although it didn't accomplish Michael's goal

POP UP John Peel, writing in *The Guardian*, praised Jackson's *Bad* Tour Wembley show as "a performance of matchless virtuosity... I wish my children had been there. It is something they would never have forgotten"



"THE
BAD TOUR
WAS A VERY SIMPLE
SHOW. IT WAS ABOUT
THE MUSICIANS, THE
MUSIC, THE DANCING
AND MICHAEL'S
PERFORMANCE"

of selling 100 million copies or match the sales of *Thriller* (35 years later no other album has either), *Bad*'s success should not be underestimated. Its sales tally is currently estimated to be between 45-50 million and the album was the first to produce five US No. 1 singles (it was the only album to do so until Katy Perry's *Teenage Dream* in 2009).

Critics, who loved Michael's bold new sound, unanimously praised the album. As he had with *Thriller*, Michael had tried to encompass a variety of genres and planned to release the majority of the album as singles (he had shot five videos before the album was released).

Unlike the previous album though, where singles were pulled in quick succession, *Bad* was to be a drawn-out project, planned to last at least 18 months while Michael was on his mammoth world tour. Kicking off in Japan on 12th September, just weeks after the album release, the Bad World Tour was Michael's first solo tour and, according to his mouthpiece Frank DiLeo, his last. DiLeo announced that it would be Michael's only tour and that he would be focusing solely on music and films after it ended. A gargantuan undertaking at the time, the tour's focus was all about Michael and showcasing his talent.

"We thought what we were actually constructing on the stage was huge, but looking back at it in comparison to what happens today, this was basically a very simple, simple show," recalls Vincent Paterson, co-director and choreographer of the tour. There were no set changes or even any costume changes. The only time Michael left the stage is when he graciously left the stage and gave those amazing musicians the chance to really show the world what they could

LATE 1980s



LATE 1980s



The Bad Tour grossed \$125 million, and by the time it ended Michael had played 123 concerts in 15 countries



do. But this was a very simple tour. It was about the musicians, the music, the dancing and Michael's performance. That's what blew me away."

Spanning 16 months, the tour marked Michael's first performances outside the US in a decade, taking in Asia, Australia, and Europe before returning to the US. As expected from Michael, who was as obsessed with sales figures and breaking records as he was making them, the tour fulfilled his dream of being the biggest tour in history at that time – playing to 4.5 million people, including a week-long stint at Wembley Stadium before ending the European leg in front of 125,000 fans at Liverpool's Aintree Racecourse.

"Michael would always say, 'I want to give something to the people out there that love us that they've never seen before,'" Vincent says. "That was Michael's goal, to constantly break the boundaries. That goes for anything he was doing whether it was an album, a live tour or a short film. That's why Michael was so competitive. That was his drive."

As the tour reached its conclusion at the end of 1988, Michael's first foray into film since *The Wiz* opened in cinemas across Europe. Having always referred to his videos as short films, Michael had always envisioned seeing them on the big screen and he realised that with *Moonwalker*, a compilation of videos with the long-form video of *Smooth Criminal* the film's centrepiece. Released at the height of Michaelmania, the film was a box office hit and did brisk business when it was released on VHS in 1989.

As the *Bad* era and tour wrapped up at the end of 1988, Michael once again vanished from public view. While on the road, scores of workmen had been toiling round the clock to ensure Michael's very own magical kingdom was complete for his return. He had bought a Santa Barbara estate in 1988, five years after he first saw it while shooting the video for *Say Say Say*, creating his own world, the only place he felt he was safe from the prying eyes of a world from which he felt detached.

Naming it Neverland (in homage to his favourite book *Peter Pan*), the 3000-acre estate housed a theme park, a zoo, cinema, bowling alley, a main ranch with guest cottages, a railway running through the estate, extensive gardens and rooms filled with toys, models, film memorabilia and antiques. It was a place where he had everything he cared about and was most comfortable with, surrounding himself with animals and visits from children from local hospitals.

Though the latter would later have serious repercussions on his life, for a while, Michael Jackson had created an untouchable fantasy world which afforded him sanctuary from the outside world, which was just the way he liked it. ■

AS
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LISTEN UP!

Now hear Michael Jackson's toughened-up sound in full via our Spotify playlist: <http://spoti.fi/29H1YT2>



POP UP Neverland, originally Zaca Laderas Ranch, was built between 1977 and 1982 by property developer William Bone, who named it Sycamore Valley Ranch. Jackson is said to have paid \$14.6 million for it





JACKSON WITH...

OTHER ARTISTS

WHEN YOU'VE GOT THE UNIQUE VOICE OF MICHAEL JACKSON, IT'S PRETTY HARD FOR OTHER SINGERS TO KEEP UP. CLASSIC POP INVESTIGATES THE MINEFIELD OF THOSE DUETS...

JOHN EARLS

While Michael Jackson was blessed with one of the greatest voices the world has known, it's questionable whether it was a voice that naturally shared breathing space with other vocalists... no matter how famous. Mick Jagger, Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder, Freddie Mercury, Paul McCartney... all recorded duets with Jackson, and all barely escaped intact from the experience. Only the most deluded soul would claim that *Say Say Say*, *State Of Shock* or *Just Good Friends* are really worthy of Jackson or his stellar collaborators.

Indeed, it's telling that possibly Jackson's finest duet – and one of his most successful – was made with someone usually out of the spotlight. *I Just Can't Stop Loving You* from *Bad* still gets airplay and is so well-established that it's often forgotten that it's a duet at all. But, yes, Jackson's backing singer Siedah Garrett stepped up to the mic, having already co-written *Man In The Mirror* for the album. Garrett was a backing singer on Madonna's *True Blue* album before she was chosen by Quincy Jones to share lead vocals after Barbra Streisand and Whitney Houston turned *I Just Can't Stop Loving You* down. Whether a better-known singer would have been willing to let the song do the work rather than try vocal acrobatics is doubtful.

Jackson attended Streisand's comeback gig in Las Vegas in 1993 and both performed at Bill Clinton's inauguration ceremony that year, but they didn't record together. Nor, officially, did Jackson and Houston – although they did supposedly record the duet *Color Of My Soul* in 2006.

Jackson's history of duets date back to his Jackson 5 days. Fellow former child star Stevie Wonder tried nurturing Jackson's talents, offering him his song *A Pretty Face Is* as far back as 1974 after The Jackson 5 sang backing vocals on Wonder's album *Fulfillingness' First Finale*. In the event, although Wonder co-wrote *I Can't Help It* on *Off The Wall*, it wasn't until 1987 that the two stars finally collaborated in earnest – *Just Good Friends* on *Bad* and *Get It* on Wonder's album *Characters*.

Both songs are forgettable, which is probably preferable to being remembered for all the wrong reasons like Jackson's Paul McCartney duets *Say Say Say*, *The Girl Is Mine* and *The Man*. On hearing *Thriller*, McCartney's fellow Sixties icon Mick Jagger wanted a piece of the action. Arthur Collins, head of the Stones label Rolling Stones Records, said: "Mick became obsessed with Michael Jackson. He wanted to know every detail of his career – his record contract, how the *Thriller* singles were selling..." The

Michael in the
recording studio with
Siedah Garrett, 1987

result was *State Of Shock*, notable for being Michael's last hit with his brothers on The Jacksons' final album *Victory* in 1984. Engineer Bruce Swedien, who went on to co-write Jackson's hit *Jam*, recalled: "Michael told Mick he should warm up his vocal chords before the session began. And Mick didn't hesitate."

Jagger also performed the song with Tina Turner filling in for Jackson at Live Aid the following year. But *State Of Shock* was originally intended for Freddie Mercury. It was one of three songs Jackson and the Queen great recorded together for possible inclusion on *Thriller*. None were considered good enough, and were only given a belated release on 2014's *Queen Forever* compilation.

If Jackson and Mercury's skyscraping vocals were just too rich to combine together effectively, Jackson was often willing to at least attempt to tone his voice down, regularly recording backing vocals on friends' songs. Diana Ross' *Eaten Alive*, Brandy's *It's Not Worth It* and Donna Summer's *State Of Independence* all feature Jackson warbling away in the background. That said, the biggest hit featuring Jackson on backing vocals is again by a relative unknown – funk classic *Somebody's Watching Me* by Motown founder Berry Gordy's son Rockwell, an archetypal one-hit wonder.

On the surface, Jackson's most unlikely backing vocals were on Kenny Rogers' country song *Goin' Back To Alabama*, which also features Lionel Richie in the vocal booth. But Jackson and Richie's *We Are The World* featured Rogers and Willie Nelson, while Jackson sang with country stars Reba McEntire and Billy Gilman on 2001 charity single *What More Can I Give?* "You start off envying his talent and his life," said Rogers after Jackson's death. "And then you're just thankful you don't have to go through what he went through."

Generally, however, Jackson was similar to Morrissey for preferring singers who tried to sound as much like him as possible – hence writing with R Kelly on *You Are Not Alone* and *Cry*, and citing Akon, Chris Brown and Ne-Yo as his favourite current singers in his final interview in 2007. "What Ne-Yo is doing is wonderful," he told *Ebony*. "He has a very Michael Jackson feel, but that's what I like about him."

Akon recorded *Hold My Hand* with Jackson, which was eventually released on the posthumous *Michael* album in 2010. "Michael was like a big brother to me and always kept me focused," Akon, who received a £200,000 diamond watch from Jackson after recording *Hold My Hand*, told *Billboard*. "If I had issues, he would console me through them. He'd pressure me to stay healthy, saying 'Are you eating right? What are you doing out on the road? Are you exercising, drinking a lot of water?'"

Another of Jackson's big loves was comedy. While his plan to record the theme to his hero Richard Pryor's film *The Toy* had to be abandoned when it clashed with *Thriller*'s recording schedule, Jackson was able to help out Eddie Murphy on the comic's 1993 album *Love's Alright*. Having peppered his early Eighties stand-up albums with R&B songs such as *Boogie In Your Butt* (yes, really), Murphy waited until the height of his film fame to release a full music album. That Murphy's commercial peak coincided with his film choices turning to crap is comparable to *Love's Alright* – Murphy isn't a bad singer as such, but the world would have existed quite happily without such a bland vanity project. Jackson offers backing

vocals on opening song *Yeah* along with a host of other stars including Elton John and Luther Vandross, before trying vainly to inject life into the vapid eco-funk *Whatzupwitu*. Once a firebrand comic worthy of Pryor, by *Whatzupwitu* Murphy was dancing around in a video with Jackson among a load of doves, hearts and CND signs. "The song is all about the world, asking it 'What's up with you?'" Murphy philosophised to MTV. "Michael isn't like you and me – he's Michael Jackson! But he's always been cool. When he set the record straight in his interviews, going 'That's a lie, that's a lie, that's true, that's true', everyone went 'Oh, he's not so strange after all.' And that was the guy I'd always known." Whether Murphy discussed his infamous stand-up routine about dating Jackson's ex Brooke Shields remains unknown.

Around the same time as helping Murphy out, Jackson sang with long-forgotten boyband 3T – Tito Jackson's sons Taj, Taryll and TJ. Michael made a rare excursion as a producer for 3T's 1995 debut album *Brotherhood*, as well as duetting on lead single *Why*. Originally intended for *HISStory* before being given to his nephews, *Why* flopped at home in the US, but reached No. 2 in the UK, only kept from the top by The Spice Girls' *Wannabe*.

With his comeback concerts in London looming, Jackson set about recording with a parade of new talent like Britney Spears, Lady Gaga and Justin Timberlake. Most of those scheduled duets remain unreleased, though Timberlake collab *Love Never Felt So Good* was a single for 2014's posthumous album *Xscape*. Like McCartney, Wonder and Mercury before him, Timberlake was another huge name whose duet with Michael Jackson wasn't as stellar as it could have been. Sadly, 'twas ever thus.

LITTLE WONDER

A POP STAR IN SPRINGFIELD

A big fan of cartoons, it's no surprise that Michael Jackson got involved with *The Simpsons*. Contractual obligations with Sony prevented his identity being made public, but Jackson co-wrote *The Simpsons'* 1990 hit *Do The Bartman* with his drummer, Bryan Loren, and sang backing vocals on the single, before making another appearance in the *Simpsons* episode *Stark Raving Dad*. Under the pseudonym John Jay Smith, Jackson voiced mental hospital patient Leon Kompowsky, a bricklayer who's convinced he's Michael Jackson. Before realising that he isn't Jackson, Kompowsky does another Jackson duet – with Lisa Simpson on *Happy Birthday Lisa*. Jackson suggested several ideas for the *Stark Raving Dad* script. Bart telling everyone that Michael Jackson was coming to his house? That was Jackson's idea. Sadly, Jackson's acting talents didn't extend to providing the voice of the "normal" Kompowsky; that was *Simpsons* regular Hank Azaria, also the voice of Moe and Apu.





1990s

I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES

IF ANY POP SUPERSTAR WAS GOING TO STRUGGLE TO TOP THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE EIGHTIES AND BECOME EVEN MORE WIDELY KNOWN – EVEN NOTORIOUS – IT WAS MICHAEL JACKSON. BUT HE MANAGED IT, WITH HIS MUSIC, HIS VIDEOS, AND HIS INCREASINGLY ECCENTRIC BEHAVIOUR...

PAUL LESTER



Jackson with guitarist
Jennifer Batten, Tokyo,
December 30 1992



Many

lesser artists might have been felled by the level of fame Michael Jackson enjoyed – or rather, endured – in the Eighties. It is to

his credit, then, that he managed to continue to record and perform at all in the Nineties, given the forensic level of scrutiny his every waking (and, in some cases, sleeping) move would attract.

Far from withdrawing from view, if anything he upped the ante, producing three of the decade's biggest albums, putting on some of the most spectacular shows, and creating videos and visual moments as arresting as any in his extraordinary career. It was a period beset by controversy, but in a way this was the natural corollary of Jackson's colossal celebrity.

What do you do for an encore after you've released the biggest album in history (*Thriller*, 65 million copies sold as of 2016), and the follow-up doesn't do too shabbily (*Bad*, estimated at between 30 and 45 million sales)? Answer: you either run and hide, accepting that your own high standards can't possibly be matched, or you try and sustain or exceed your towering achievements. All in the white hot glare of publicity.

Just call it *Thriller: the Fallout*. One of the inevitable consequences of Jackson's Eighties mega-success was an barrage of media attention, good and bad. In the Nineties, the latter often threatened to outweigh the former. Among the gossip and hearsay, rumours and Chinese whispers were stories ranging from the sublimely silly to the grimly serious. The press nicknamed him 'Wacko

'Jacko' and in the Nineties this contorted, garish version of Michael fought for supremacy with Jackson the credible, supremely gifted recording artist and performer.

There had long been signs that this immensely talented, shy yet ambitious, reclusive and guarded young man was also somewhat sad, isolated and alone, despite (or perhaps because of) all his wealth and acclaim. As *Rolling Stone* magazine has pointed out, when *Los Angeles Times* music critic Robert Hilburn reminisced about meeting Jackson in 1981, when the singer was 23, before he'd left the family home in Encino for his fortress of solitude known as Neverland, the star struck him as "one of

the most fragile and lonely people I've ever met... almost abandoned. When I asked why he didn't live on his own like his brothers, instead

remaining at his parents' house, he said, 'Oh, no, I think I'd die on my own. I'd be so lonely. Even at home, I'm lonely. I sit in my room and sometimes cry. It is so hard to make friends, and there are some things you can't talk to your parents or family about. I sometimes walk around the neighbourhood at night, just hoping to find someone to talk to. But I just end up coming home.'"

Imagine that Michael Jackson, all of his doubts and fears, manias and capacity for self-tortment, only magnified by globe-conquering works such as *Thriller* and *Bad*. That is the character who haunted the Nineties, like a wounded but wilful, exaggerated, extreme version of his younger self.

The decade began innocently enough, with a series of awards that took stock of his phenomenal Eighties. The eternally childlike star visited Disneyworld in Florida, invited 82 abused

POP UP In 1990 Michael was presented with MTV's Video Vanguard Award
Of The Decade award, the Entertainer Of The Decade Award at the American Cinema Awards, and the Top Selling Artist Of The Eighties award from CBS



WHAT DO YOU DO AFTER THE BIGGEST ALBUM IN HISTORY? YOU EITHER RUN AND HIDE, OR TRY TO SUSTAIN OR EXCEED YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

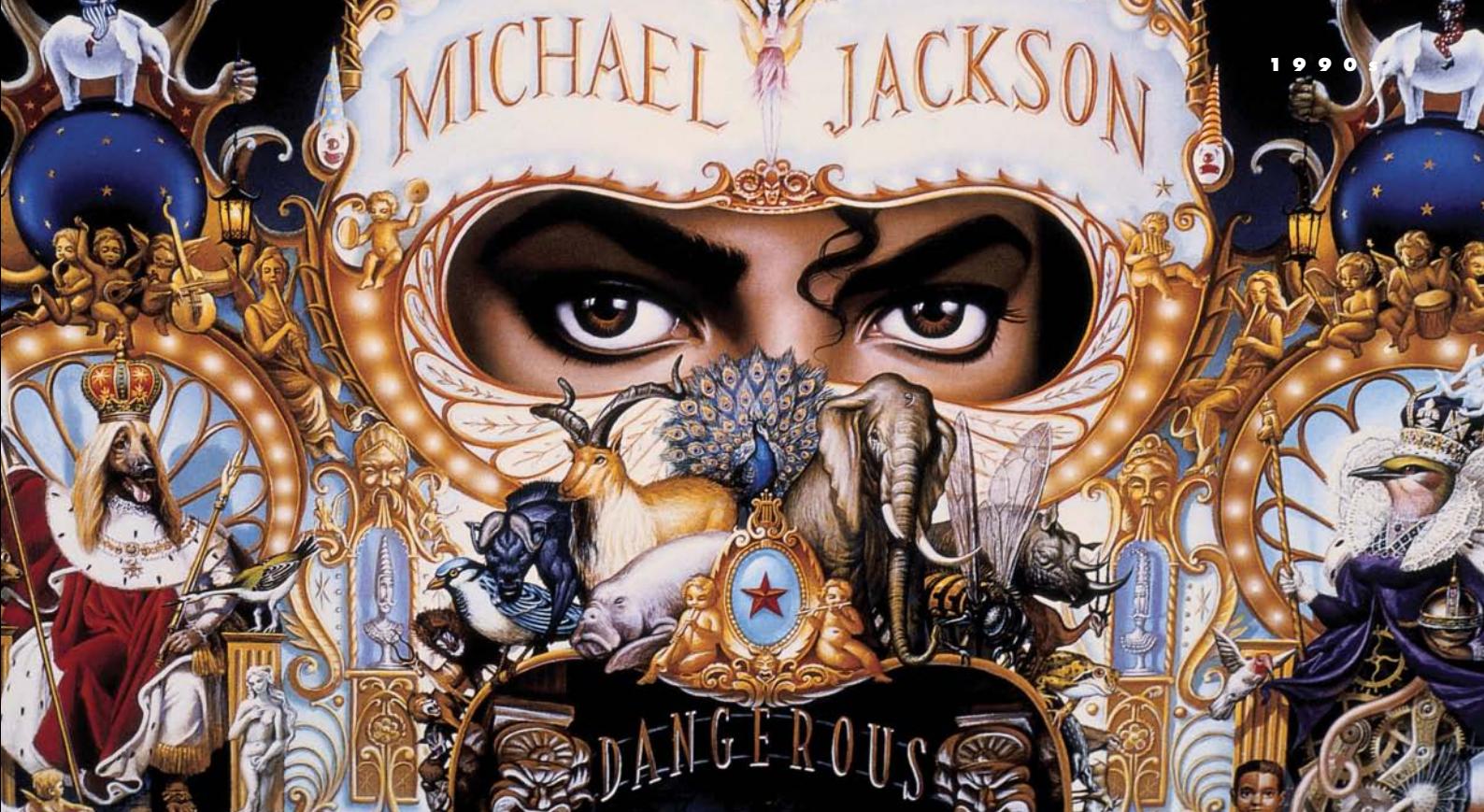
1990s

Onstage at the 1995
Video Music Awards,
Los Angeles



1990s





children to his Neverland home, and was one of the first guests at the Taj Mahal Casino owned by his friend, billionaire Donald Trump. In June '90, Michael collapsed while dancing at LA nightclub the Hideout. He was taken to St John Hospital where he was treated for chest pains. The problem was attributed to bruised ribs apparently suffered during a dance workout. He was visited by the Jackson clan (except LaToya) and Elizabeth Taylor.

After recuperating at Neverland, Michael finally began work on the long-awaited follow-up to *Bad* at the Ocean Way/Record One's Studio 2 in LA. Titled *Dangerous*, it was hailed as Michael's tough, edgy response to his sister Janet's 1989 album, *Rhythm Nation 1814*. It was also deemed his swingbeat/New Jack Swing album – his response to contemporary developments in R&B and rap – with creative input and production from Teddy Riley, one of the architects of New Jack Swing.

Dangerous marked the end of Jackson's association with Quincy Jones, producer of *Off The Wall*, *Thriller*, and *Bad*. Sixteen months after sessions began – the longest period Jackson had ever spent recording (he usually took six months) – his eighth solo album was completed in October '91 at both Larrabee North and Ocean Way Studios. Despite the presence of Riley and producer Bill Bottrell in the studio, it was Jackson who took the reins on *Dangerous*: he is credited as the main producer, as well as writer on 12 of the 14 tracks. Twelve years after *Off The Wall*, he was becoming the autonomous auteur of his dreams.

Like its three predecessors, *Dangerous* was a coherent album statement that also functioned as a singles compendium: as with *Bad*, nine of its

tracks were lifted off for individual release. The first was *Black Or White* in November '91. The single shot to No. 1 in three weeks, making it the fastest chart-topper since The Beatles' *Get Back* in 1969. It ended the year at the top and remained there well into 1992, for a total of seven weeks, making Jackson the first artist to have No. 1 hits in the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties. As though to confirm his status as the biggest star since the birth of rock'n'roll, in the UK *Black Or White* became the first single by an American to enter the chart at pole position since Elvis Presley in 1960 with *It's Now Or Never*. The next single, *Remember The Time*, was the most swingbeat-influenced track

on the album, and was another worldwide hit. It was followed by *In The Closet* (initially conceived as a duet between Jackson and Madonna), then

Jam and *Who Is It*, both of whose staccato strut was typical of the music on *Dangerous*. The next single from the album was somewhat different: *Heal The World* was a ballad whose lyrics called for universal improvement; it was a sign of Jackson's continued popularity that the sixth single from his album reached the Top 10 of most nations, including No. 2 in the UK (a position it held for five weeks). Incredibly, the seventh single, *Give In To Me*, repeated that success in Britain, while the eighth, the symphonic, gospel-infused *Will You Be There*, became one of the album's biggest hits in the States. Finally, *Dangerous'* penultimate track, *Gone Too Soon*, was dedicated to the memory of Jackson's friend Ryan White, a teenager from Kokomo, Indiana who came to national attention after being expelled from his school for having HIV/AIDS. Issued in December 1993, two years

For *Dangerous*, artist Mark Ryden created an album cover deep in symbolic detail

AFTER SIXTEEN MONTHS – THE LONGEST PERIOD HE HAD EVER SPENT RECORDING – HIS EIGHTH SOLO ALBUM WAS COMPLETED IN OCTOBER 1991

POP UP Other big production names, including swingbeat prime movers Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds and Antonio "L.A." Reid, were mooted for *Dangerous*, but in the end Terry Riley was chosen



REMEMBER THE TIME

KEY ALBUMS 1991-1999

DANGEROUS

EPIC, 1991

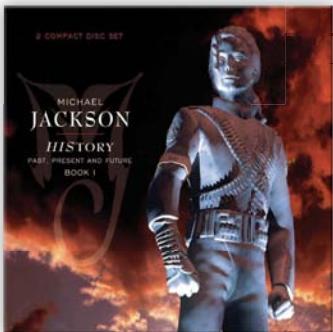
Michael's eighth studio album was, like *Off The Wall*, *Thriller* and *Bad*, virtually a greatest hits collection. Of its 14 tracks, nine were singles, including two – *Black Or White* and *Heal The World* – that became as well-known as anything in the MJ canon. With its mix of ballads and urban bangers, *Dangerous* was as diverse as its predecessors, and helped sustain his staggering popularity well into the Nineties. The press mainly loved it, too. Robert Christgau, the self-styled Dean of New York rock critics, ordained it Jackson's best since *Off The Wall*. Alan Light of *Rolling Stone* described the Jackson of *Dangerous* as "a man, no longer a man-child", confronting his well-publicised demons and using music to achieve "transcendence through performance"; he deemed it a successful attempt to rise to "the impossible challenge set by *Thriller*". More recently, Stephen Thomas of AllMusic has deemed the album "a much sharper, riskier album than *Bad*".



HISTORY: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, BOOK I

EPIC, 1995

There was little arguing with CD1: it starts with *Billie Jean*, and continues with *The Way You Make Me Feel*, *Black Or White*, *Rock With You*, *She's Out Of My Life...*. In other words, some of the greatest pop music ever made (although some listeners allergic to schmaltz might quickly eject the disc before the final track, *Heal The World*). As for the second disc of new material, that more than held its own. The actual tune-quotient might not have been quite as high, but the rhythms were relentless, the production was pristine, and the hooks were, well, hooky. Even the songs which mainly comprise Michael complaining about how awful his life is are compelling. All credit to him: instead of retreating, Jackson faced his detractors and created a new body of work, one more funkily forceful and aggressively revelatory than any of his earlier songs.



BLOOD ON THE DANCE FLOOR

EPIC, 1997

This album contains eight remixes from *HIStory* – *Scream Louder*, *Money, 2 Bad*, *Stranger in Moscow*, *This Time Around*, *Earth Song*, *You Are Not Alone* and *HIStory* – and five new songs: *Blood On The Dance Floor*, *Morphine*, *Superfly Sister*, *Ghosts and Is It Scary*. It was written and recorded literally on the fly – it was put together while Jackson was on his *HIStory* World Tour, which meant songs produced in, among other exotic climes, Sweden, Switzerland and Germany. Despite confusion as to whether or not it was a bona fide new release, *Blood On The Dance Floor* remains a thrilling artefact, with songs about promiscuity and painkillers, psychotic ex-lovers and his own public image, all set to often brutal industrial dance noise-funk that had as much in common with Nine Inch Nails and Marilyn Manson as it did the Michael Jackson of yore. Hard to believe this was the same character who brought us *Rockin' Robin* and *Ben*.



after *Black Or White*, it demonstrated how effectively and extensively *Dangerous* had, for 24 months, exerted a dominance over the music world, one verging on hegemony.

The album itself was released by Sony (in March '91, Jackson renewed his contract with the label for \$65 million, a record-breaking deal at the time) concurrently with *Black Or White*. It featured Jackson's trademark vocal hiccups, rappers Heavy D and Wreckx-n-Effect, a slew of urban rhythms, funk and smooth R&B, guitar from Guns N' Roses' Slash, a ballad composed in tandem with *Man In The Mirror* collaborators Siedah Garrett and Glen Ballard. *Dangerous* was an eclectic triumph and a commercial blockbuster, one reputed to have sold 32 million copies by 2008.

Critical opinions ranged from the disappointed – the *Los Angeles Times* called it "a messy grab-bag of ideas and high-tech non sequiturs, with something for everyone from the man who has everything", although it did add, "*Dangerous* is also mostly good, expertly made fun" – to the delighted: the *Guardian* has since decreed it "his finest hour", praising its "fiendishly intricate" rhythms, its "mechanic complexity and tautly funky precision", the "charmingly innocent" ballads and Jackson's "sexual urgency that the Neptunes would later draw from Justin Timberlake".

At the end of 1992, *Dangerous* was given the best-selling album of the year worldwide award while *Black Or White* was best-selling single of the year worldwide at the Billboard Music Awards. His *Dangerous* World Tour, which ran from June '92 to November '93, grossed \$100 million and was watched by 3.5 million people during 70 concerts.

Still, something was gnawing at Jackson. One of the few *Dangerous* tracks not released as a single was *Why You Wanna Trip On Me*, a song in which he complained about the media's probing of his eccentricities instead of focusing on real ills and issues. There was some of that over the next couple of years. He founded the Heal The World Foundation in 1992, which brought underprivileged children to Jackson's ranch to enjoy theme park rides that he had built on the property. The foundation also sent millions of dollars around the globe to help children threatened by war, poverty, and disease. In the same year, he published *Dancing The Dream*, a collection of poetry, which received mostly negative reviews. In March '93, he performed *Remember The Time* at the Soul Train Music Awards in a chair, explaining that he had suffered an injury in rehearsals.

In January '93, he made a powerful appearance at the Super Bowl XVII halftime show in Pasadena, California, a performance that was prefaced by Jackson standing completely motionless for 90 seconds while the crowd cheered and attracted more viewers than the game itself. A month later, another appearance drew a large audience, this time for his 90-minute interview with Oprah Winfrey – only his second television interview since 1979. During the encounter, Michael opened up about his childhood abuse at the hands of his father, his loneliness growing up, and his skin condition of vitiligo. He also took the opportunity to issue several denials: no, he didn't sleep in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber, and no, he didn't buy the bones of the Elephant Man. The interview became the fourth most-watched non-sports program ever in the US and catapulted *Dangerous* back into the Top 10.

1990s





A shot from the
15-minute Superbowl
half-time show,
January 31 1993



The abiding impression of Jackson was of a somewhat eccentric but generally untarnished individual; eternally childlike, the Peter Pan of pop. In February '93 he was given the Living Legend Award at the 35th Annual Grammy Awards in LA. *Dangerous* won a Grammy for Best Engineered – Non Classical album. He won a clutch of awards at the American Music Awards, where he also earned the International Artist Award of Excellence for his performances and humanitarian concerns.

However, that image of him as odd but not aberrant changed forever in the summer of '93. That was when he was accused of sexual abuse by a 13-year-old boy called Jordan Chandler and his father, Evan Chandler, a dentist. Jackson's home was raided by the police, "suspect" books and photographs were allegedly found and Jackson himself

suffered the indignity of being strip-searched. The investigation was inconclusive, no charges were filed, and Jackson settled with the Chandlers out of court for \$22 million – he later told journalist Martin Bashir, on British TV, that he simply wanted to put the issue behind him.

Still, the anguish the case caused Jackson was considerable. It was exacerbated by an unforgiving press, while among sectors of the public his reputation plummeted. Why, they wondered, did he construct his own private fantasyscape, with its amusement park and train rides redolent of Disneyland that would be so inviting to youngsters? The explanation – he wanted to spend time with kids because he missed out on his childhood – seemed plausible, and yet his name henceforth became a symbol for scandal and sensation.

In May '94 Jackson married the only person on the planet who might understand his plight – Lisa Marie Presley, the daughter of the century's other stratospherically famous entertainer, Elvis Presley. She had been a rock during the molestation case and endlessly sympathetic of Jackson's plight, and although the marriage only lasted 18 months, the couple remained friends.

Jackson's next music was a direct response to these calamitous events, as raw and cathartic as any he had ever released. The first single released from what would be his ninth solo album, *HIStory: Past, Present and Future, Book I*, was entitled *Scream*. It was a howl of pain and rage, carried by a series of harsh metallic beats, directed at the media for their avalanche of opprobrium and admonishments. "Somebody please have

mercy/ 'Cause I just can't take it/ Stop pressurin' me," he railed in the song, a collaboration with hi-tech urban luminaries Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis – producers of, among many others, Janet Jackson's 1986 breakthrough album, *Control* – and Janet herself. The video was even more startling. Directed by Mark Romanek and costing a reputed \$7 million, the largely black and white short featured a cartoonishly stylised Michael and his sister, looking weird and arty in her thick thatch of wig hair and coal-black made-up eyes, in a spaceship, playing computer games, smashing objects, dancing and screaming. The single's B-side, *Childhood*, was a lachrymose apologia exploring Jackson's difficult adolescence: "No one understands me/They view it as such strange eccentricities/ It's been my fate to compensate/ For the childhood I've never known..."

JACKSON'S NEXT MUSIC WAS A DIRECT RESPONSE TO THESE CALAMITOUS EVENTS, AS RAW AND CATHARTIC AS ANY HE HAD EVER RELEASED

POP UP Visiting Gabon, Michael was greeted by over 100,000 well-wishers, some carrying signs reading "Welcome home Michael"; during his trip to the Ivory Coast he was crowned "King Sani" by a tribal chief





Jackson carried on in this fashion, with exorcisms of personal grief and fury, throughout *HISStory*. Released in June '95, it was a double-album. The first disc, *HISStory Begins*, was a 15-track greatest hits affair (later reissued as *Greatest Hits: HISStory, Volume I* in 2001) that included all the hits from *Off The Wall*, *Thriller*, *Bad* and *Dangerous*; the second disc, *HISStory Continues*, contained 13 new, self-penned songs and two covers: *Come Together* by The Beatles and *You Are Not Alone* by R Kelly.

Of the original material on Disc 1, *They Don't Care About Us* was typical: a torrent of invective that found Jackson conflating social injustice with private sorrow. "Situation, aggravation/ Everybody allegation," he began. The music and lyrics on *HISStory* depicted a cornered Jackson, defensive and aggressive, but it made for fascinating listening.

Stranger In Moscow was a melancholy reflection, picturing Jackson "wandering in the rain... feelin' insane", bemoaning his "swift and sudden fall from grace". On the ballad *You Are Not Alone* ("Everyday I sit and ask myself/ How did love slip away") he seemed to be soothing himself. More bitter and recriminatory was the harsh, haranguing *D.S.* The track is said to be a diatribe against Tom Sneddon, the Santa Barbara County District Attorney who ordered the strip-search in 1993.

Continuing the theme of injustice and mistreatment was the minimalist, electronic dance track *Money* ("Lie for it/ Spy for it/ Kill for it/ Die for it"). *Tabloid Junkie* aimed darts at the media ("a parasite in black and white"). The incisive industrial funk of *2Bad* ("You are disgustin' me/ Just want your cut from me") was aimed at those wanting to financially benefit from Jackson. One

of the few songs on *HISStory* that didn't serve as a metaphor for or contain images of personal persecution was *Earth Song*, which instead examined global suffering on a grandiose, choral, symphonic scale.

Bookended by *Scream* and *Smile*, the latter a take on the Charlie Chaplin song, *HISStory* was Jackson's most excoriating and emotional work to date. Yet none of this was any barrier to success: the audience's appetite for Jackson's public auto-immolation was evidently greater than anybody would have anticipated, and *HISStory*, not in spite of but because of its relentless self-examination and media laceration, became the best-selling album of the year in Europe and sold 33 million copies worldwide, making it the biggest-selling double-disk of all time and Jackson's highest-grossing

album after *Thriller*. *You Are Not Alone* holds the Guinness World Record for the first song ever to debut at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100, while *Earth Song* topped the UK chart for six weeks over Christmas '95 and sold a million copies, making it Jackson's most successful single ever in the UK.

The Nineties were a cycle of narcissistic self-torment and messianic self-belief. In the run-up to the release of *HISStory*, a series of 30ft statues of Jackson had been built out of steel and fibreglass and placed in various European cities – in London, the giant effigy was seen floating along the River Thames. It was an awesome display of conceit, a spectacle that few would have dared match. But there were many dismayed by Jackson's latest stunt, and by 1996 there was apparently an appetite for some serious debunking. At the Brit Awards ceremony in February, during

POP UP The nine infamous *HISStory* statues were created by sculptor Diana Waniczak; one appeared on the roof of Tower Records in LA, others in Berlin, Prague, Paris and Milan. One still stands in Eindhoven in the Netherlands

THE APPETITE FOR JACKSON'S PUBLIC SELF-IMMOLATION WAS GREATER THAN ANYONE ANTICIPATED: *HISTORY* SOLD 33 MILLION COPIES WORLDWIDE



1990s

August 18 1992, and
the Dangerous tour
reaches Glasgow



1990s

November 9 1996:
the Auckland, New
Zealand stop on the
HIStory world tour



Jackson's performance of *Earth Song*, which presented him as a Christ-like figure surrounded by children, British indie pop stalwart Jarvis Cocker gate-crashed the show by wandering onstage and mooning. "It was a form of protest at the way Michael Jackson sees himself as some kind of Christ-like figure with the power of healing," the bespectacled anti-hero later explained. "The music industry allows him to indulge his fantasies because of his wealth and power. ... I just couldn't go along with it anymore."

It was an apotheosis of sorts for Jackson, a hubristic highpoint born of twin desires to proclaim his innocent love of children and, as he would have it, heal the world. Although Cocker perhaps emerged the ideological victor, Jackson hardly slunk away defeated. Despite being rushed to hospital in December '95 after collapsing during rehearsals for a TV performance, the mid-to-late-Nineties were successful. He won a Grammy for Best Music Video, Short Form for *Scream* and an American Music Award for Favorite Pop/Rock Male Artist. In May '96 there was the extraordinary *Michael Jackson's Ghosts*, a short film/music-video co-written by horror novelist Stephen King. And his HIStory World Tour – which ran from September '96 to October '97 – saw him perform 82 concerts in five continents, 35 countries and 58 cities to over 4.5 million fans, grossing \$165 million: Jackson's most successful ever tour.

This writer went to see him in September '97, at the Don Valley Stadium in Sheffield. "This ain't pop, this is a 5D avant-garde circus," ran the review in *Uncut*. "Of the holy Eighties triumvirate – Madonna, Prince, Michael – only MJ still offers such a consistent programme of vaulting ambition and Cecil De Milleian pretension. He moves like Astaire, he thinks like Aphex Twin. Be here now."

He was unstoppable. A few months earlier, in May '97, Jackson released *Blood On The Dance Floor: HIStory In The Mix*. Comprising eight remixes from *HIStory*, and five new songs, and receiving minimal promotion, it went on to sell 10 million copies worldwide – the best-selling remix album ever. His private life seemed to take a turn for the healthier and happier when, during the *HIStory* tour, he unexpectedly married his longtime friend Deborah Jeanne Rowe, a dermatology nurse, in an impromptu ceremony in Sydney, Australia. Rowe was six months pregnant with the couple's first child at the time. Michael Joseph Jackson Jr (commonly known as Prince) was born on February 13, 1997; his sister Paris-Michael Katherine Jackson was born a year later on April 3, 1998. They divorced amicably in 1999, and Jackson received full custody of the children.

Throughout the last two years of the Nineties, Jackson continued with his charity support. In June '99, he joined Pavarotti for a benefit in Modena, Italy, in support of War Child, raising a million dollars for the refugees of Kosovo, FR Yugoslavia, and additional funds for the children of Guatemala. There were further benefits in Germany and Korea. It all augured very well indeed for Jackson's sixth decade, and third as the most famous person on the planet. ■



LISTEN UP!

Now hear the best of Jackson's output from the Nineties – diverse, cathartic and at times, true genius. Stream the playlist here: <http://spoti.fi/2a5wElv>



CLAIM TO FAME

WHEN MICHAEL AND THE JACKSONS WERE INDUCTED INTO THE ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME...

At the 12th annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame ceremony, held at the Renaissance Hotel in Cleveland in 1997, Michael and his brothers were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame alongside a host of some of the most influential names in American popular music: The Bee Gees, Crosby, Stills & Nash, Buffalo Springfield, Joni Mitchell, Parliament-Funkadelic, The (Young) Rascals, gospel singer Mahalia Jackson, bluegrass pioneer Bill Monroe, and King Records founder Syd Nathan.

However, The Jacksons were the most feverishly anticipated inductees of the night. After showing footage of the boys through the years, they were introduced by Diana Ross – the brothers in matching formal evening attire (give or take Jermaine's snazzy coloured waistcoat), Michael in his usual military garb and white glove. Ross reminisced about the time they lived with her and she "tried to train them" before passing the mic to Jermaine, who gave shout-outs in the audience to their parents and to Motown boss Berry Gordy.

After Tito, Jackie and Marlon had their say, it was the turn of Michael, an alien apparition next to his brothers, all translucent skin and shiny shoulder-length jheri curls.

"I'd like to say to our family, our children and, most of all, our mother and father: you were there to protect us with unselfish love,

and because you were there, we are here," he said, contradicting somewhat contemporary revelations about Joe Jackson's abusive behaviour during his childhood.

Michael proceeded to invite Gordy onstage. Suddenly, the crowd went silent as Jackson stood there with his arm around a young boy. Then he explained that he was his godchild and the son of The Bee Gees' Barry Gibb, who also came onstage. Many initially assumed it was a mistake, or a joke – Barry, Barry. Then, Jackson admonished a cameraman. "I don't like that angle," he said, holding up his hand to the offending lens. Still, that moment of tension aside, it was a night of celebration; a culmination for The Jacksons, and Michael, who had long dreamed of being accepted by the mainstream rock fraternity.

"We were the youngest ever inductees, it was a historical moment and we're proud of that," Jermaine said of the event in an interview with this writer in 2014. "What's been our biggest achievement? Setting the tone for every band that has come along since."

"Despite being the first group ever to reach No. 1 with their first four singles, never once did we win a Grammy or an American Music Award," moaned Marlon. "But to be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame – wow, that's an achievement."





Co-writer on Jackson's
aborted 11th solo album
Resurrection, will.i.am

UNRELEASED...

THE LOST SONGS

FROM SONGS FEATURING SUPERSTARS TO ADVERTS WRITTEN WITH A SHEIKH, THE JACKSON MATERIAL STILL IN THE VAULT GIVES A FASCINATING ALTERNATIVE INSIGHT INTO HIS MIND...

JOHN EARLS

Shortly after Michael Jackson's death, LaToya claimed she'd discovered two hard drives at Neverland containing over 1000 unreleased songs. That might sound unlikely; to the public, Jackson wasn't known for rivalling Prince with his workrate. In the 30 years from *Off The Wall* until his passing, Jackson released just four full studio albums, with *Thriller* of course only running to a lean nine songs. But Jackson always said he was both an insomniac and a workaholic... and the most cursory search reveals the chance to hear scores of unreleased Jackson songs with names such as *Be Me 4 A Day*, *House Of Style* and *Nymphette Lover*.

There are around 300 songs yet to make it onto an official Jackson album, and those are just the ones that fans know of. As far back as 1977, Janet Jackson was saying: "I've seen Michael write things that I don't think the public will ever hear. Just before he left to film *The Wiz*, he put all the songs he'd written on to a tape in our parents' studio. Not one of them has been heard, and these were songs to cry for. He's written classical music for orchestras, like something by Bach or Beethoven."

Even before *Off The Wall*, the teenage Jackson was writing songs like mawkish ballad *What A Lonely Way To Go* (which he was probably wise not to let

the public hear). He reflected later that growing up with Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye meant writing songs always felt like a realistic aim. But, following his prolific burst around *The Wiz*, Jackson seemed to concentrate on writing songs of the quality of *Don't Stop Til You Get Enough*.

Very few songs from the *Off The Wall* sessions seem to have been left over. Carole Bayer Sager, writer behind Carly Simon's *Nobody Does It Better* and Patti Labelle's *On My Own*, co-wrote *It's The Falling In Love* on *Off The Wall* – but she also wrote *Goin' To Rio*, which didn't make the cut. From the 50-second extract on YouTube, it seems the gliding disco would have fitted in just fine. (You have to feel doubly sorry for Bayer Sager: 22 years later her co-write with Jackson, *Stop The War*, failed to make it on to *Invincible*.)

Before starting on *Thriller*, Jackson wrote a song for his idol Richard Pryor. But, having demoed the song, Jackson ran out of time to finish the title theme for Pryor's long-forgotten 1982 film *The Toy* as he was too busy recording *Thriller*.

When *Thriller* was reissued for its 25th anniversary in 2007, it only featured two previously unreleased songs – the uninspiring ballad *For All Time* and, on the Japanese version only, the far funkier *Got The Hots*. Quite why the former took precedence over the

Jackson/Quincy Jones stormer is a mystery. So too is the omission of veteran Jackson songwriter Rod Temperton's sumptuous pop song *Hot Street*. Jackson himself admired it and wanted it on the album, but was outvoted by Jones and Temperton himself.

Also worthy of inclusion on *Thriller 25* would have been future Alanis Morissette producer Glen Ballard's country-tinged rocker *Nite Line*, which is as close as Jackson ever got to a 9 To 5 office life ode. Less impressive from the *Thriller* sessions still in the vaults is *She's Trouble*, a throwaway bop co-written by *What's Love Got To Do With It* songwriter Terry Britten. And even that has a decent chorus.

By the time of *Bad*, Jackson still had a fair ear for which of his songs deserved to be on a finished album. He didn't pursue a handful of his own songs such as *Tomboy*, *Turning Me Off or Be Me 4 A Day*, though he was reportedly working again on the funky unreleased *Don't Be Messin' Round* for his 2009 comeback gigs at the O2 in London.

Perhaps aware of how mean they'd been with *Thriller 25*, Sony's *Bad 25* in 2012 saw eight unreleased songs emerge. Of the songs intended for *Bad* which failed to get finished, the most intriguing is the atypically strident *Crack Kills*. An anti-drugs duet with Run-DMC ("Walk This Way meets Peter Piper", suggested Michael), its recording was stalled after Bubbles attacked Jam Master Jay in his studio in Santa Monica. With DMC later describing the two parties' resulting dinner as "tense", the song never got recorded... although Run-DMC's intended verse appeared on a reissue of their *Tougher Than Leather*.

Having reissued *Off The Wall* in February alongside Spike Lee's documentary, it currently looks unlikely that Sony will also bring out *Dangerous 25* this year. If they do, there's certainly no shortage of officially unreleased songs that were made for the 1991 album. Princess Stephanie of Monaco features on *In The Closet*; she was deemed more worthy of inclusion than LL Cool J, whose two collabs *Serious Effect* and *The Truth Of Youth* both missed out. Seven of main producer Teddy Riley's songs are among *Dangerous'* bloated 14-song running order, but even he missed out with the uplifting *Joy*. But you really have to feel for Jackson's drummer, Bryan Loren, co-writer of *The Simpsons'* novelty No. 1 single *Do The Bartman*. That led to the two men writing around 20 songs for *Dangerous*, but not one has yet seen the light of day.

Notorious B.I.G. dueted with Jackson on *This Time Around* for the new disc on *H1Story* in 1995, and the pair also collaborated on a cover of George Harrison's *Not Guilty*. Jackson was plainly on a Beatles tip: as well as *Come Together* he reworked *Strawberry Fields Forever* but, like his Harrison cover, Jackson's psychedelic interpretation has yet to emerge. *H1Story*'s other big omission saw Jackson reunited with Rod Temperton for *Groove Of Midnight* – but, like *Hot Street* 12 years earlier, Temperton's timeless pop was axed.

By *Invincible*, Jackson seemed to be all over the place. Before, he was able to focus on shaping his albums with a select coterie of co-writers; now he was even letting *Thong Song* buffoon Sisqo into his studio. Their unreleased co-write *The Gloved One* is every bit as prosaic as you might imagine. Much more fascinating is that Pharrell Williams' *What's A Guy Gotta Do* also got rejected, as was the Lauryn Hill co-write *This Is Our Time*. There's also *People Of The World*, available on YouTube,

from the *Invincible* sessions. A ballad with Japanese J-Popsters J-Friends, it's a sub-Earth Song mess with unfinished lyrics – mainly consisting of "da-di-di" – floating across the screen for four minutes.

With unusual haste, Jackson returned to the studio after *Invincible* to begin work on a new album, *Resurrection*. Around 10 songs were demoed, including heavy Rodney Jerkins workout *Pressure*, before Jackson had to postpone the project when he faced trial in 2005. Although the singer seemingly never took up the sessions again after the trial, he did meet the musician who would become his closest collaborator since Quincy Jones; Black Eyed Peas leader will.i.am, who co-wrote dozens of songs, including the James Brown tribute *Miss You*.

Leading up to the comeback shows at London's O2, Jackson began writing furiously, mainly with his keyboardist and *Invincible* co-writer Brad Buxer. Lady Gaga producer RedOne and AR Rahman were also involved in the sessions to ready new material for the shows. Gaga recorded *Picture*, a duet which was slated to begin the concerts.

Of course, Jackson didn't live to perform the shows. Following his death, Sony signed a £200m deal with his estate to release 10 posthumous albums. These include *Bad 25* and Cirque Du Soleil remix tie-in *Immortal* as well as the two official albums of unreleased songs, the underwhelming *Michael* and *Xscape*. That neither album is considered worthy of Jackson's name is partially down to the fact that they inevitably comprise of songs Jackson didn't think good enough to release at the time.

But, if a further eight albums is likely to spread his unheard material too thin, there is definitely at least one superb unreleased album to be had. Whether or not Sony pick the right collaborators to finish it is – judging from the Akon and 50 Cent-heavy posthumous albums released so far – another matter.

LITTLE WONDER

THE PRINCE AND THE KING

The tale of Michael Jackson and the Bahraini sheikh is one that perhaps typifies how the singer became a lost soul towards the end of his life. Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa is the playboy son of the King of Bahrain. He set about befriending the Jackson family, which was cemented when he lent Michael £2.2 million towards his defence costs during 2005. By then, Michael had already sung backing vocals on a song Sheikh Abdullah co-wrote with Jermaine Jackson, the catchily-titled *He Who Makes The Sky Grey*.

At the end of Jackson's trial, Jackson and family – along with his entourage – went to stay with Sheikh Abdullah at his palace in Bahrain. There, the Sheikh persuaded Jackson to sing on another song he'd written, *I Have This Dream*. It was intended to raise money for victims of Hurricane Katrina, but the Sheikh's record label 2 Seas couldn't come to an agreement with Sony. The two men fell out and, in 2008, Sheikh Abdullah sued Jackson for £4.7 million in London's High Court. The Sheikh claimed the money was costs; Jackson said the money had been gifted to him. It was eventually settled out of court.



Jermaine with
Sheikh Abdullah

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TRouble IN PARADISE

COULD THE KING OF POP END YEARS OF SILENCE AND
RECLAIM HIS TITLE AS THE GREATEST ENTERTAINER OF
ALL TIME? WE LOOK AT THE STAR'S CONTROVERSY-
FILLED FINAL DECADE...

STEVE HARNELL



Jackson performs with
NSYNC at Madison
Square Garden, 2001

HOLY

contributors to 2001's *Invincible* and you might be able to piece together an explanation.

The final studio LP proper from Jackson was an epic – 16 tracks and almost 80 minutes of music. As this was his first full-length album of new material for six years, the stakes were high.

In an attempt to keep up with some of the young pretenders nipping at his heels, Jackson elected to go for an edgier and more urban feel to the record in places. In what has now become standard operating procedure for R&B and hip-hop albums, multiple producers were drafted in to helm the material. Diversity was seen as preferable to the singular vision of a Quincy Jones.

Teddy Riley returned once more to co-produce four tracks, but it's the contribution of Rodney Jerkins in the studio that shines brightest. By the turn of the millennium, Jerkins was a hot property in the world of chart-friendly R&B, rising through the ranks with a clutch of hits including *The Boy Is Mine* by Brandy and Monica, Whitney Houston's *It's Not Right But It's Okay* and *Say My Name* by Destiny's Child. Sessions were so lengthy for the *Invincible* album that Jerkins was forced to crowbar in Brandy's *Full Moon* project between breaks with Jackson. Behind the faders elsewhere there were appearances by established big-hitter names like R Kelly and Babyface alongside newer talent such as Andreao 'Fanatic' Heard and Richard Stites.

POP UP Up to 50 songs were lined up for *Invincible*. Abandoned titles included a remake of the Isley's *Shout*, *Another Day* with Lenny Kravitz, *All In Your Name* with Barry Gibb and *Do You Want Me* with Dru Hill



exactly do you go about spending \$30 million on making just one album? Take one look at the monumental list of

The album kicks off with a trio of crackling hard-edged tunes, all co-produced by Jerkins. The feisty and defiant *Unbreakable* features a rap cameo from the Notorious B.I.G. and is another in a long line of Jackson's kiss-offs to his critics, something akin to *Leave Me Alone* or *Scream*. The glitchy *Heartbreaker* goes toe-to-toe with the urban high-rollers of the day and admirably holds its own while the title track is another funky highlight with Michael bigging himself up against an array of love rivals.

Break Of Dawn harks back to the smooth glories of *Human Nature* from *Off The Wall*, but it's many of the remaining downtempo tracks that can make *Invincible* heavy-going for the non-diehards. Jerkins shores

up the album's mid-section with the superb *You Rock My World* but the ballads *Speechless*, *You Are My Life* and *The Lost Children* are too insipid

to bear close comparison with his best work. The latter song came in for some harsh criticism from *The Guardian*'s Alexis Petridis, who called it a "hideous, syrupy sub-Broadway showtune" and noted that the closing spoken word section had "deeply unpleasant connotations and [was] appallingly misjudged".

In the preceding weeks before *Invincible* hit record store racks, the signs for Jackson's return to the fray were positive as he rebuilt his public image back to mythic proportions. The album's release was heralded a month earlier by a clutch of live shows – a surprise appearance alongside *NSYNC to duet on *Pop* at the MTV Video Music Awards as well as two major concerts at Madison Square Garden in New York to mark his 30th anniversary as a solo artist. At the latter, Jackson appeared on stage with his brothers for the first time since 1984 and the remaining supporting cast was nothing less than stellar – Destiny's

INVINCIBLE WAS AN EPIC, WITH ALMOST 80 MINUTES OF MUSIC. AS HIS FIRST FULL ALBUM OF NEW MUSIC IN SIX YEARS, THE STAKES WERE HIGH

At the Jackson brothers'
reunion concerts,
Madison Square Garden,
September 2002



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Photo © Photoshot



Photo © Photoshot

Child, Usher, Luther Vandross, Jill Scott and Guns N' Roses axe hero Slash all turned up to pay tribute to the King of Pop.

Jackson knew that for all his aura of mystique, it was time to give *Invincible* the big push. Among a series of interviews he undertook was a phone-in Q&A with Anthony DeCurtis for getmusic.com. It was a sedate affair with DeCurtis resolutely staying clear of any whiff of controversy, and Jackson was at pains to push the positives of the album rather than allowing any muckraking of his private life.

"I tried to make [*Invincible*] a potpourri of wonderful melodies of any style," he tells DeCurtis. "I don't believe in styling or branding any type of music. A great artist should be able to create any style, any form – from rock to pop and folk, to gospel and spirituals. Anybody can sing it, from an Irish farmer to a lady who scrubs toilets in Harlem."

In light of his subsequent alleged prescription drug addition, it's ironic that Jackson's few harsh words in an otherwise wholly fluffy interview were reserved for those who have lost their songwriting muse due to living a rock'n'roll lifestyle. "Any painter or sculptor does their best work in their 60s or 70s. Fred Astaire did his best dancing in his 70s. In the music business, some of the great artists have become stumped because of self-abuse at such a young age with the crazy things they drink and the pills [they take]. We should take care of our bodies a little more."

In another interview with Vibe magazine, Jackson revealed he was happy to make use of new styles to stay relevant and welcomed the chance to allow Jay-Z to remix *You Rock My World*. "[Jay-Z's] hip, the new thing, and he's with the kids today. They like his work. He's tapped into the nerve of popular culture."

Jackson also spoke candidly of his reservations about his children following him into the music industry. "It's hard, since most of the children of celebrities end up becoming self-destructive because they can't live up to the talent of the parent. People used to always say to Fred Astaire Jr., 'Can you dance?' And he couldn't. He didn't have any rhythm, but his father was this genius dancer. It doesn't mean that it has to be passed on. I always tell my children, 'You don't have to sing, you don't have to dance. Be who you want to be, as long as you're not hurting anybody'. That's the main thing."

After Jackson's death in 2009, Rodney Jerkins also spoke to Vibe magazine about the album and recalled the tortuous recordings which ran over several years. "It was a lot of starting and stopping. One time, [Michael] was like, 'Let's

start from scratch... I think we can beat everything we did.' That was his perfectionist side. I was like 'Man, we been working for a year, we gonna scrap everything?' But it showed how hard he goes.

"There's stuff we didn't put on that I wish was on there. My first batch [of beats] is what I really wanted him to do. I was trying to go vintage, old school Mike. He kept *Rock My World*, but he wanted to go more futuristic. So I would find myself at junkyards – we'd be out hitting stuff, to create our sound.

"It was Michael's idea [for *Invincible* to be so long]. We actually had that conversation where I was like: 'You should make it 10 songs and that's it.' You never know... maybe he felt it would be his last album."

If the reception at the live shows and buzz around the album had both augured well, a long-running record label dispute with Sony Music Entertainment over the ownership of Jackson's masters still

Above: the World Music Awards in London, 2006

POP UP Aside from *This Is It*, Jackson's last real concert performance – pictured above – was joining a children's choir performing *We Are The World* at the 2006 World Music Awards in London



BACK TO THE GARDEN

JACKSON MADE A TRIUMPHANT RETURN TO NEW YORK – BUT THERE WERE SIGNS ALL WAS NOT WELL

If there was any doubt remaining concerning Michael Jackson's pulling power at the box office, then his two 30th Anniversary Special concerts in 2001 more than laid them to rest.

Staged at the legendary Madison Square Garden in New York on 7 and 10 September, Jackson's comeback gigs were among the most hotly-anticipated in pop music history. Ticket prices broke all records, with the best seats sailing through the \$10,000 mark. For his part, the star was reportedly paid \$15 million for the two shows.

Tied in to mark Jackson's first ever single release *Got To Be There* from 1971, the concerts were a star-studded affair and included appearances from Hollywood royalty as well as an array of soul and R&B stars paying their own tributes to the singer.

The running order and featured acts between the shows differed slightly between the two nights. Whitney Houston and Marlon Brando – the latter giving a typically rambling humanitarian speech – only appeared in the first concert, and did not reprise their roles three days later.

Elsewhere, the diverse line-up across the two shows included Dionne Warwick, who performed *I'll Never Love This Way Again*, James Ingram

and Gloria Estefan's duet on *I Just Can't Stop Loving You*, and another of Jackson's famous friends – and later the wife of one of the show's producers David Gest – Liza Minnelli, who sang *You Are Not Alone* and *Over the Rainbow*.

But these were mere aperitifs for the main event – the return of Michael Jackson with an added bonus of an on-stage reunion with his famous family. After running through a handful of family classics including *Can You Feel It*, *ABC* and *I Want You Back*, Michael took to the stage alone and plucked a brief selection of solo hits out of the bag to deafening roars during a mini-set that featured a slowed-down *The Way You Make Me Feel*, *Black Or White*, *Billie Jean*, *Beat It* and *You Rock My World*.

The shows were eventually merged into one for a two-hour TV special, which aired on the US network ABC in late November. But they were not without controversy. Some fans commented that Jackson seemed strangely disoriented at points during the first gig – he improvised the closing section of *Billie Jean* and only attempted a perfunctory moonwalk. Both David Gest and Michael's brother Jermaine would later allege that by this point the singer's addiction to painkillers was already having a detrimental effect on his performance.

threatened to dilute the impact of his comeback. The singer subsequently claimed Sony failed to fully get behind the release, despite the fact *Invincible* still went on to sell 13 million copies worldwide. For their part, Sony claimed that Jackson's decision not to tour on the back of the record ultimately affected its long-term sales potential. The argument got even uglier when the singer later labelled the company's chairman Tommy Mottola (and former husband of Mariah Carey) a "racist" and a "devil" who failed to fully support black artists on the label.

One of the most notorious episodes in Michael Jackson's troubled relationship with the media came with the 2003 documentary with Martin Bashir. The journalist first came to prominence in 1995 after his interview with Diana, Princess of Wales for the BBC's *Panorama* current affairs series. The fly-on-the-wall show *Living With Michael Jackson* makes for extraordinary and, at times, disturbing viewing, as Bashir pulls no punches in trying to get to bottom of the King of Pop's everyday existence. Such was its impact that it could be said to have lifelong implications for the star as more controversial aspects of his life were once more put under the microscope.

Over the course of eight months, Bashir attempted to uncover, as he put it, "the disturbing reality of [Jackson's] life today". At first, we're shown the childlike aspects of the singer's demeanour as he climbs his 'Giving Tree' and talks about how he's been inspired to write many of his songs up in its branches. He also reveals, to Bashir's bemusement that his favourite ways to unwind are "water balloon fights and climbing trees".

But the pain of Jackson's upbringing is never too far from the surface. He tells Bashir how his father Joe took a belt, ironing cords and "whatever else was around" to his children while they were rehearsing as The Jackson 5. Pointedly, he adds that he never lays a finger on his own children "when people say the abused [go on to] abuse, that's not true at all. I remember hearing my mother scream, 'Joe! You're gonna kill him, stop it!' I was so fast, he couldn't catch me half the time, but when he would catch me, oh my God, it was bad. Really bad," Michael adds. "We were terrified of him. I don't think he realises to this day how scared we were of him. So scared that I would regurgitate just seeing him. Sometimes I'd faint and my bodyguards would have to hold me up."

A brisk shopping trip at a Las Vegas store shows just how extravagant and out of control Jackson's spending habits had become. Bashir remarks that the singer lives like an 'emperor or Louis XIV' as he spends millions of dollars on furniture.

The journalist also tenaciously pursues a line of questioning about Jackson's changing appearance to which the star responds that Joe was often behind much of his insecurity about that, too. "He would tease me about how I looked. He'd say 'God, your nose is big. You didn't get it from me'. On top of that you have to go on stage in the spotlight in front of hundreds of thousands of people. I would have been happier wearing a mask."

Later, when Bashir returns to his questions on appearance, Jackson gets touchy about the gradual whitening of his skin. "You gotta ask God about that. That has nothing to do with me. That's ignorance. I don't control puberty, or the fact that I have vitiligo."

When Bashir lists a whole host of plastic surgery procedures that the star is rumoured to have



Photo © Photofest



Jackson exits the
Santa Barbara
courthouse, April 2005

Photo © Photofest



Jackson with
Elizabeth Taylor at
the Royal Albert Hall,
London, May 2000

Photo © Photoshot



had, Jackson denies the lot. "None of it's true. It's B.S. [The media] made it up. When I was growing a beard, one paper said I had each individual hair transplanted into my face with a laser. I can't even grow a beard now? You ignorant fool, who wrote such a thing! It's not the truth. It's garbage."

The documentary also includes footage of Jackson dangling his child Blanket over the balcony of a Berlin hotel room and disturbing scenes during a visit to the city's zoo where the star and his family are mobbed by fans and paparazzi. The singer seems totally unphased by the carnage, much to Bashir's disbelief.

There was more damaging elements to come though. "The most disturbing aspect of his life story," says Bashir near the documentary's closing scenes. "I, like everyone, knew that 10 years ago, children were being invited to sleep over at Neverland."

Bashir was referring to the Jordan Chandler case and added: "I'd assumed that now he'd be more cautious, but to my utter astonishment, I discovered that children were still sleeping over – sometimes in his house, sometimes in his bedroom."

Tensions rise as Bashir points out that the majority of people would be astonished at the singer's behaviour, especially in the light of the Chandler case. Jackson, though, is totally unrepentant: "I feel sorry for them. They're judging people. The most loving thing you can do is to share your bed."

It makes for extremely uncomfortable viewing. As a PR exercise, it was a disaster and for many people their views on Jackson became set in stone from this point onwards.

The fallout from the Bashir documentary was monumental. Jackson immediately realised the gravity of this career-threatening negative publicity.

Claiming that the footage was a "twisted and edited construction of scandal and innuendo", the singer went to the extraordinary length of issuing a rebuttal documentary that showed Bashir being largely complimentary about him as a man and a father. In an attempt at damage limitation, Jackson's new video called upon his parents Joe and Katherine, brother Jermaine, ex-wife Debbie Rowe and confidante Elizabeth Taylor to give glowing testimonials.

Only Bashir now knows the real truth behind this hugely complicated saga. Outtakes presented in Jackson's version of events seem to contradict the journalist's voiceover in the final cut. Did Bashir twist the truth to suit his own ends? It's a hugely labyrinthine topic that can be endlessly debated.

The content of the Bashir documentary went far from unnoticed. Soon after it was aired, the Santa Barbara county

attorney's office began a criminal investigation into goings-on at Neverland that would ultimately prove pivotal during the rest of Michael's life. A preliminary investigation by the Los Angeles Police Department and the Department of Children and Family Services concluded that the allegations of child abuse were unfounded. But following further information from the family of Gavin Arvizo – the teenage cancer survivor featured in the Bashir documentary – the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office reopened the case, sending 70 investigators to execute a search warrant at Neverland.

In November 2003, Jackson was charged with child molestation and administering alcohol to a minor. The ensuing five-month trial made headlines across the world as a string of damaging accusations continued to emerge. The star was finally acquitted on all counts on 13 June 2005.

POP UP Jackson only spoke at his trial via videotape, but celebrity supporters who did testify on his behalf included Macaulay Culkin, chat show host Jay Leno, actor Chris Tucker and comedian George Lopez





Photo © Photofest

**Diamond Award winner
at the 2006 World Music
Awards, Earls Court**

Despite his acquittal, Jackson was struggling financially and by March 2006 the main house at Neverland Ranch was closed to save money. Throughout the remaining part of the year, reports began to surface that the star was collaborating with will.i.am from the Black Eyed Peas but fans would have to wait almost three years before he resurfaced with anything concrete.

In what was one of the major entertainment stories of the decade, March 2009 saw Jackson announce a remarkable closing chapter to his performing career. The *This Is It* residency at London's O2 Arena was initially intended to be just 10 shows, but the astonishing appetite of fans soon meant this number swelled to 50 as more than one million tickets were snapped up in less than two hours.

Jackson hinted at retirement after the shows – the residency's title

was pretty explicit in that regard, of course. The spectacular gigs were due to run from 13 July 2009 to 6 March 2010. An extraordinary press conference was staged with the usual bravado and flair for over-the-top theatricality. Jackson, though, looked unprepared, ill at ease and befuddled. After thanking fans and throwing a few shapes, there was little in the way of fine detail from the man himself. "These will be my final performances in London," he said. "When I say 'this is it', I really mean it. I'll be performing the songs my fans want to hear. This is the final curtain call. I'll see you in July."

As in life, so it was in death – Michael Jackson's premature demise on 25 June 2009 was the final controversial chapter in a life littered with them.

The residency at the O2 Arena, of course, never came to pass. With less than three weeks to go before opening night, Jackson was found dead at

his rented mansion in Los Angeles. The news of the star's untimely demise prompted an instant and massive outpouring of grief across the world. Google blocked web searches about his death for half an hour when the story broke in the mistaken belief their search engine was under DDoS attack, while Twitter and Wikipedia crashed under the strain of fans desperately trying to find out the latest on the story. AOL subsequently labelled the event a "seminal moment in internet history. We've never seen anything like it in terms of scope or depth."

Record sales for Jackson jumped 80-fold after his death. Six of his singles returned to the UK's Top 40 as he broke chart records across the globe.

Key to the circumstances surrounding the singer's death was his use of the powerful drug propofol, which is used in hospitals for anaesthetic

purposes. Nicknamed 'milk of amnesia' due to its white appearance, the drug has been linked with heart attacks in the past. When Jackson's home was searched by investigators after his death, they found several bottles of the drug at the property.

Jackson's personal physician Conrad Murray had joined the singer's camp in May 2009 as part of an agreement with AEG Live – the concert promoters behind *This Is It*. When investigators traced the propofol back to Murray, he was charged with involuntary manslaughter in February 2010. After a trial, Murray was eventually convicted on the charge in November 2011, serving two years of a four-year jail term.

The following years have seen various rumours surface concerning Jackson's addiction to painkillers, anti-anxiety medication and anti-depressants although a subsequent BBC report that took into account

POP UP Before he passed, Michael's plans for the future included a three-movie deal, a tour starting in China, another Superbowl appearance, one more tour with his brothers, and opening a children's hospital



2 0 0 0 s

A moment from the
BRIT Awards, 2006



2 0 0 0 s

Jackson at the final
rehearsal for his 'This Is
It' shows to be held at
the O2 Arena in London



Photo © Photofest

the singer's autopsy result found him to be healthy and with no hint of a heart condition.

As befits the self-proclaimed 'King of Pop', Jackson's memorial service was something akin to a state funeral. This was, of course, no traditional ceremony. The event itself was partly-organised by the gig promoters behind the singer's This Is It comeback tour, AEG Live. Held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on 7 July, such was the interest from the public that organisers had to issue tickets via a lottery system and more than one million well-wishers applied for one of the 17,500 available to the service.

Among the mourners were many of Jackson's closest friends including Smokey Robinson, Lionel Richie, Brooke Shields, Magic Johnson and Stevie Wonder. In tribute to the singer, each of Jackson's brothers escorted the gold-plated coffin wearing a sequinned glove on one hand.

During one eulogy, Motown founder Berry Gordy told the crowd: "The more I think about Michael Jackson, I feel the King of Pop is not big enough for him. I think he is simply the greatest entertainer that ever lived."

The service also featured a number of musical guests. Mariah Carey and Trey Lorenz performed *I'll Be There* and Usher descended from the stage during a heart-rending *Gone Too Soon* to place his hand on Jackson's coffin. He ended the song in tears before being consoled by fellow mourners. In an unexpected move, Jackson's daughter Paris gave a brief speech to the crowd saying: "I just want to say, ever since I was born, Daddy has been the best father you could ever imagine... and I just want to say I love him so much." The service was broadcast live around the world and some estimates put viewing figures at almost one billion people.

After Jackson's untimely death, AEG recouped their losses on the abandoned This Is It residency shows with a hastily-released documentary. The feature-length effort comprised the planning stages and rehearsals for the London concerts and an array of behind-the-scenes footage featuring Jackson, his musicians and backroom staff. The documentary's producer Kenny Ortega confirmed that none of the footage was originally intended for official release and came in for criticism from fans that the movie was an exploitative cash-in exercise. Adding that the scenes have "a real unguarded honesty to them," Ortega admitted that the material was only ultimately meant for Jackson's private library.

Meanwhile, other fans were happy to feast on the scraps and at least see something of what could have been. Despite some fans boycotting its release and Jackson's family refusing to endorse it, *This Is It* was still a massive box office success, and went on to become the highest-grossing concert film of all time.

Film critics generally gave the documentary a warm reception. Seasoned veteran Roger Ebert was at pains to dispel rumours that AEG would have known that the singer was in bad health before the run of shows in his review: "Here is not a sick and drugged man forcing himself through gruelling rehearsals, but a spirit embodied by music. *This Is It* is a portrait of Michael Jackson that belies all the rumours that he would have been too weak to tour."

Fans were left to ponder what might have been. Would Jackson have pulled off the biggest comeback of all time? It's destined to be one last unanswerable question about the most remarkable of lives. ■

NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN

A PLACE TO NEVER GROW UP: THE FANTASY WORLD OF MICHAEL JACKSON'S IMAGINATION

Michael Jackson's extraordinary Neverland Ranch was the ultimate in pop star playgrounds – literally as well as metaphorically. It was named, of course, after the fantasy land in the singer's perennial touchstone *Peter Pan*, and Jackson was first introduced to the 3,000-acre site through Paul McCartney, who was staying at the property while the pair filmed the video for their *Say Say Say* duet of 1983. Jackson fell in love with it immediately but it took several more years before the singer closed the deal – he finally moved into the ranch in 1988 after snapping it up for a reported \$30 million.

Originally called the Sycamore Valley Ranch, the main house was designed by architect Robert Altevers in a French-Normandy style. Alongside the gargantuan main residence, the most famous features added by Jackson included a petting zoo and two narrow-gauge railway lines. Its two trains, one of which was named Katherine after the star's mother, would transport guests along the quarter-of-a-mile journey to a private 50-seater cinema and full-size amusement park on the complex.

Apart from regularly hosting trips for underprivileged and sick children, Neverland also staged the eighth marriage of Elizabeth Taylor and was a regular hang-out for Hollywood

A-listers including Marlon Brando, Eddie Murphy and Liza Minelli.

Jackson eventually moved out of the ranch in 2005 following the fallout from the police investigations into goings-on there two years earlier. Within a year, the majority of its staff were dismissed and the property was closed up. The ownership of Neverland then remained in limbo for several years as Jackson struggled to keep up with loan repayments.

The star's daughter Paris returned to her childhood home a year after her father's death. Saddened at its rundown appearance, she eventually announced plans in 2013 to buy it back and return it to its former glory. But the plans failed to materialise and the house has now been put on the open market with an initial starting price of \$100 million.

If you're thinking of dipping your hand into your pocket then be warned that many of the trademark features of Neverland's Jackson era have now been removed. The amusement park is long gone, along with the menagerie of animals, although the odd llama still reportedly remains. There are, though, odd glimpses of its former controversial owner still in situ such as the private train and the beautiful floral clock that formed the ranch's centrepiece.

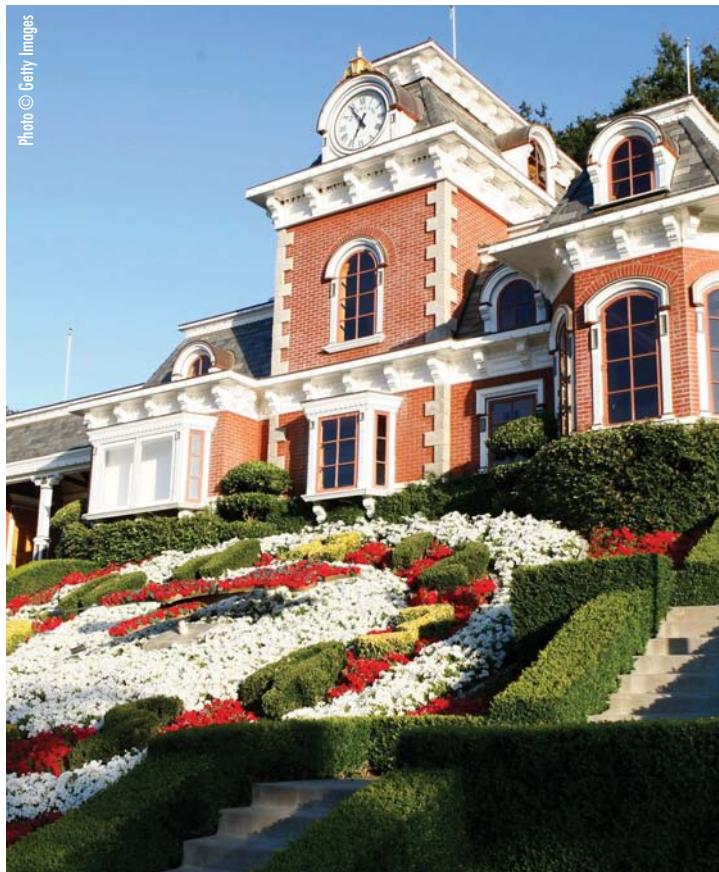


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A dramatic black and white photograph of Michael Jackson. He is wearing a shiny, sequined red jacket over a dark shirt. His hair is styled in his signature 'big' look. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

MJ THE VIDEOS

AS MTV BECAME A PROMINENT PLATFORM FOR ARTISTS TO GET THEIR MUSIC HEARD AND SEEN IN THE EARLY EIGHTIES, IT'S NOT SURPRISING THAT MICHAEL, A FILM OBSESSIVE WITH HOLLYWOOD ASPIRATIONS, WOULD GO ON TO BECOME THE FIRST GENUINE SUPERSTAR OF THE VIDEO AGE...

MARK LINDORES



Michael lighting up the sidewalk on *Billie Jean*: 'It was extraordinary, instinctive'

Cast of *The Wiz*: Michael, Nipsey Russell, Diana Ross, Ted Ross



HAVING

legends such as Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly and Charlie Chaplin as much as, if not more than, his musical idols Jackie Wilson and James Brown. By 1979, having landed his first film role in *The Wiz*, for which he had gained rave reviews for his performance as the Scarecrow, Michael had begun re-evaluating his own career path.

With his first foray into acting under his belt and the release of *Off The Wall*, he prophesied that he would no longer limit himself to being a singer,

grown up idolising old Hollywood musicals, Michael Jackson worshipped screen

LEGENDS LIKE FRED ASTAIRE AND GENE KELLY AS MUCH AS HIS MUSICAL IDOLS JACKIE WILSON AND JAMES BROWN

an actor or a dancer; he would now identify himself as an entertainer, incorporating elements of all and utilising the nascent medium of music video to do so. Taking references and influences from Hollywood old and new, he would go on to develop a signature style which combined the showmanship of stylised musicals and gangster flicks and the hi-tech approach of sci-fi blockbusters and gore-fests that were prevalent at the time.

However, when it came to shooting his first music videos, Michael was to discover that it

was a world away from the golden age of the silver screen. His first video for *Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough* had been an expensive process and the record company, who weren't even convinced that videos were a worthwhile expenditure, were reluctant to spend much on the next two.

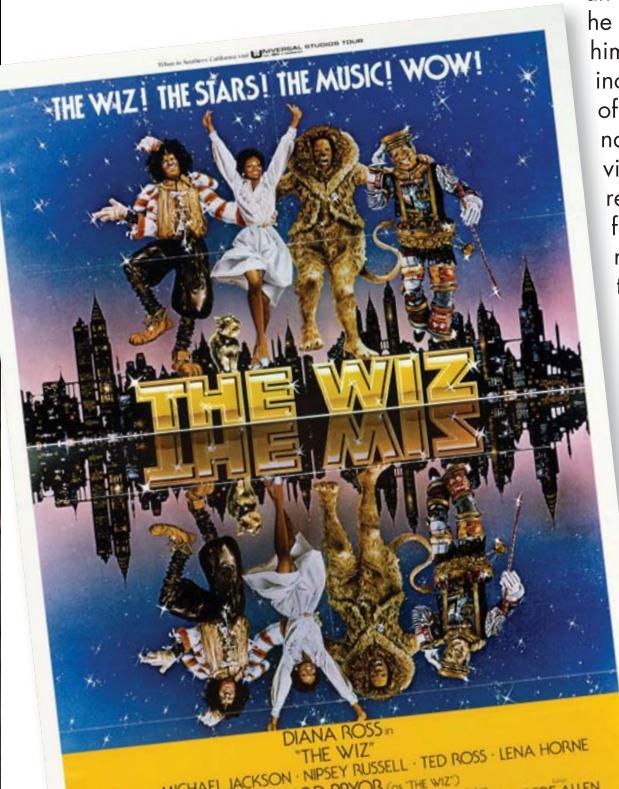
"The videos were done for absolute peanuts," says director Bruce Gowers, who had been tasked with making the videos for *Rock With You* and *She's Out Of My Life*. "All we could afford was the laser. This one was probably about \$3,000. If you look at it, there's nothing there but a laser and Michael Jackson! We

filmed on a tiny stage in LA called the 800 Stage that we got cheap because we were shooting quite a lot of music videos. Everything was rented; the cameras, the stage, the Duveline drop, the smoke, everything!"

After *Rock With You* was wrapped, Michael changed from his sequinned costume into a simple sweater and the video for *She's Out Of My Life* was shot in the same afternoon. With no costumes, effects or flashy lighting, it was solely down to Michael to deliver. "That video was all about his performance," says Bruce. "Michael was really emotional and at points during filming I actually thought he was going to break down and cry. It worked for the song."

By the time Michael released *Thriller* in 1982, he had big ideas and a bigger video budget. *Off The Wall* had been a huge hit and MTV was growing in stature, making videos a valuable promotional tool for developing artists. When it came to shooting *Billie Jean*, Michael wanted the film to have a cinematic feel to reflect the song's storytelling.

"He'd seen the Human League's *Don't You Want Me* and he loved the cinematic aspect of that," recalls director Steve Barron. "When I got the track I really liked it. I thought it was really unusual. Obviously *Billie Jean* was an amazing song and I thought



"BEAT IT, BILLIE JEAN,
THRILLER – THEY WERE ALL
MINI-MOVIES, THE FIRST OF
THEIR KIND. IT OPENED UP
A WHOLE OTHER WORLD"

A leaner, meaner
Jackson in a still
from *Beat It*

immediately it was a perfect song to do a video for. It gave a real storyline atmosphere within the song. It had a mystery and it felt like it was unfolding, it had everything that was exciting to do for a director in it. The idea actually came from an idea I'd written for another music video that had never got made which was about the Midas Touch. I think it was originally for Joan Armatrading. I kept thinking as I listened to the song that that concept worked really well, much better for *Billie Jean*."

Steve flew to LA to shoot the video and was suitably impressed by Michael's performance. Although the singer was shy and quiet, once the camera was on, it wasn't just the paving stones that lit up. "When the chorus hit and he sprung into this dance... that was unlike anything I'd ever seen," Steve says. "It was just extraordinary, instinctive. He pulled it all together and turned it into what we saw."

Billie Jean's promo strategy was derailed when MTV refused to play the video, only relenting when the boss of CBS Records threatened to pull their artists from the channel unless they played *Billie Jean*.

"MTV at that time never, ever played a black artist no matter how successful they were or how big a record was," says Michael's former manager Ron Weisner. "All the videos that were on there were these really cheap, cheesy videos. When we were making the music for *Thriller*, we wanted to make a statement. We wanted to make what I called 'mini-movies' not music videos. We went out of the box and hired people who never did music videos. They were either film people or they were commercial directors, to get a whole different feel and have a story line.

"So when you look at *Beat It*, *Billie Jean* and *Thriller*, they were all mini-movies – the first of their kind. Nobody had ever done that, and by doing that, it opened up a whole other world. All of a sudden, it wasn't just a music video. Everything took giant leaps. The audience was accustomed to hearing people sing, they weren't accustomed to seeing people. The record business, at that time, had really bottomed out. MTV brought it back to life."

Becoming the most-played video on the station, *Billie Jean* was the catalyst of MTV opening up to black artists such as Prince, Tina Turner and Lionel Richie. It was followed in quick succession by Michael's own *Beat It*, a spectacular dance-off set amongst gritty gang warfare in downtown LA, before the record-breaking horror-fest that was *Thriller* completed Michael's triptych of visual vignettes, setting a precedent for artists creating an image to illustrate their music.

By 1987, with the release of *Bad*, he had taken the format to another level. The previous year he had starred in *Captain EO*, a short film exclusively shown at Disneyland theme parks, directed by Francis Ford Coppola and produced by George Lucas, and now Jackson decided to enlist Academy Award-winning directors and scriptwriters to work on his own films. He affirmed how important the visual field was to him by debuting *Bad*'s title track simultaneously with its video, thereby intrinsically linking them together.

During the recording of *Bad*, he took breaks to film videos almost as soon as the songs were finished – partly due to the fact that he would be embarking on a world tour, and partly because he was sometimes more excited about creating visuals as he was music, often devising a character, scenario or dance move first, then writing a song around it.

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Having worked with Hollywood royalty Francis Ford Coppola, George Lucas and Angelica Houston on his Disneyland-exclusive 3D film *Captain EO*, Michael expanded on his contacts book with the inclusion of Martin Scorsese and novelist and screenwriter Richard Price for the title track from his *Bad* album.

Requiring grit and gravitas, Michael called on the Academy Award winners to help him make the video, which was based on a real-life incident that he had read about in *Newsweek* magazine about a student called Edmund Perry, a student who was peer-pressured into mugging a man that turned out to be a plain-clothes police officer and was shot dead, prompting a storm of protest about police brutality and peer pressure.

In the video, Michael plays a student called Daryl who is pressured by his old gang (led by actor Wesley Snipes in an early appearance) into committing crimes only to stand up to them. His retaliation against his past is the infamous song and dance scene in the subway station, which was influenced by *West Side Story*.

"It was a different form for me," Martin Scorsese told CNN. "The big issue really was the temptation to do this really major dance piece with camera moves and cutting which we had planned on page based on his choreography. And working with Michael Chapman, who choreographed the fight scenes in *Raging Bull*. Shooting the big dance scene was the allure of it.

"Michael was never a person who was overly enthusiastic. He was quiet. Accepting. He was very precise about what he wanted in the choreography. He was concerned, like with any great dancer, they like to be seen full-figure. But that wasn't the case because I'd planned other things. The use of close-ups, and tracking him. Eventually he understood that. There was never any resistance, but questions. He was open to everything."

The 18-minute film, which was shot in tenement buildings in Harlem and at the Hoyt Schermerhorn subway station in Brooklyn, was shot in black and white before transferring to colour for the song and dance sequence, which was choreographed by Gregg Burge and Shalamar's Jeffrey Daniel. The elaborate scene was the world's first glimpse of Michael Jackson's new "tough, street" image, complete with crotch grabs and biker-style buckles and straps, as he fronted a troupe of real-life B-boys. The look was captured at the end of filming for the cover of the *Bad* album.

After *Thriller*, a new video from Michael Jackson was a major event and was treated so, premiered simultaneously around the world on August 31 1987 as part of a TV Special called *Michael Jackson: The Magic Continues*.



© Getty Images

Michael shakes hands with Wesley Snipes on the set of the *Bad* video

TERRORS ON THE SCREEN

In October 1983, after a year on the charts, Michael was alarmed when his *Thriller* album began to slip down the charts and devised a plan to re-energise the album's chart run. Having recognised the power of the music video with *Beat It* and *Billie Jean*, he enlisted acclaimed director John Landis, fresh from box office success with *An American Werewolf In London*.

As the seventh single from an album which was on course to become the biggest-selling album ever, the record company saw no reason to spend money on another video, let alone such an expensive one. Michael raised the \$500,000 budget by selling the rights to MTV and Showtime for the premiere of the video, along with a *Making Of* documentary.

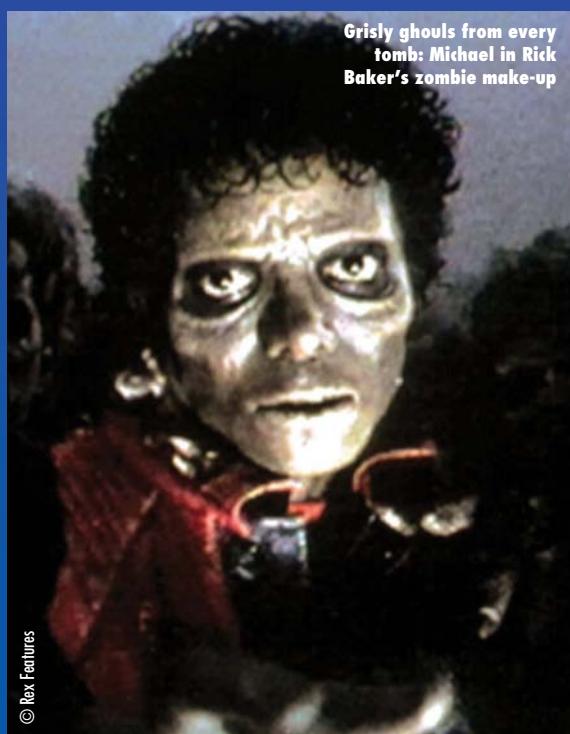
John assembled a team which included his make-up effects artist Rick Baker, choreographer Michael Peters (who had worked on *Beat It*) and John's wife Deborah, a successful Hollywood costume designer, to create Michael's look. Her iconic red and black leather jacket became one of Michael's trademarks.

"When it came to Michael's jacket, there was a tremendous amount of thought that went into it," Deborah says. "I had sketched different looks, but I found ultimately once I came across the jacket with the V with the extended shoulders, that was it. It's graphic and structural, and I wanted a good silhouette. The V in the jacket really echoes the pyramidal shape of the choreography. He's at the head of the chevron, and they're working their way down the street towards the viewer. I knew I had to have him in a colour that would absolutely pop off the screen. There was so much fog and mystery on the set, lots of black, white, beige, grey, brown, that I thought to myself: which colour would really stand out? So I went with red. Michael had never worn a red costume in his life before, and I really sold him on it."

Playboy playmate Ola Ray was hired to play Michael's love interest and *Thriller* took a week to shoot in September 1983. Michael got his wish to turn into a monster and a zombie, and fronted an iconic dance ensemble worthy of any of his heroes.

Thriller premiered in December before an audience of 64 million people, preceded by a disclaimer stating that Michael did not believe in the occult to appease the elders at Jehovah's Witness centre. Such was demand that MTV showed the 14-minute video every hour, on the hour. It was kept on heavy rotation and sent the album back to No. 1. It also became a huge money-spinner in its own right when it was released on home video, along with the *Making Of* documentary, becoming the biggest-selling VHS of all time.

Grisly ghouls from every tomb: Michael in Rick Baker's zombie make-up



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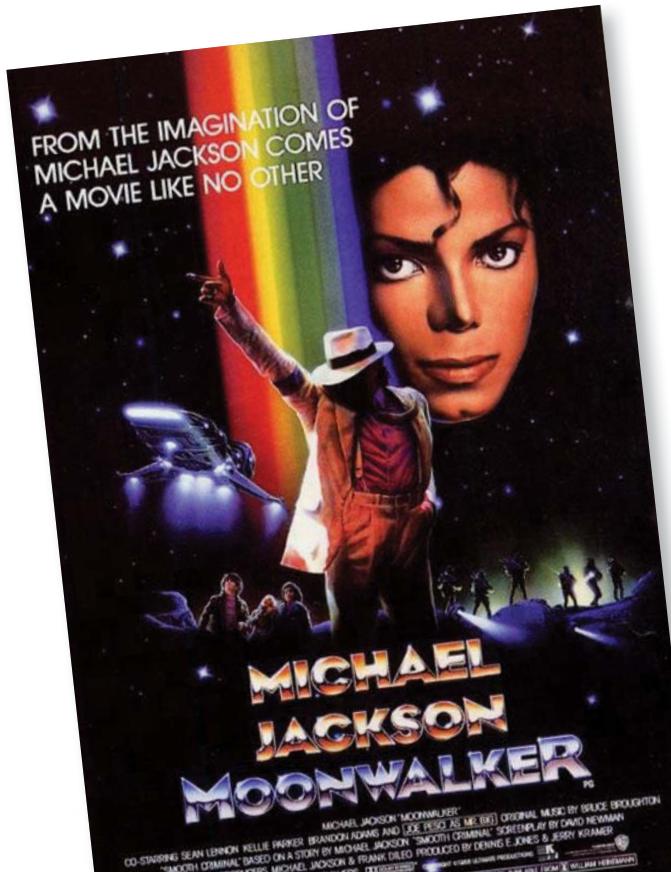
Such was the case with *Smooth Criminal*. "I knew he had a penchant for movies of the '30s and '40s, that film noir stuff," says Vincent Paterson, the choreographer of the video. "I suggested that rather than 10 guys in tuxedos it could be in an underground club in the 1930s. He loved the idea." With its heavily sleek tailored costuming and intricate choreography (the 'lean' is second only to the moonwalk in Michael's repertoire of dance moves), the video fulfilled a lifetime ambition for Michael when *Smooth Criminal*, directed by special effects maverick Colin Chilvers, formed the basis of *Moonwalker*, Michael's own film.

Packaged with a series of state-of-the-art clips including a Claymation *Speed Demon* and a *Gulliver's Travels*-inspired video satirising his "Wacko Jacko" tabloid persona for *Leave Me Alone* as well as a live performance of *Man In The Mirror*, the *Smooth Criminal* video was extended to a 40-minute film in which Michael was a superhero able to transform himself into a car, a robot and a spaceship to thwart the plans of an evil drug baron, played by Joe Pesci.

"Michael always said, and not just to me, that *Smooth Criminal* was his favourite piece," says Paterson. "To me, that's kind of evidenced by the many things that originated in it: the band around the arm, that kind of hat, the white coat. He took on that persona of the *Smooth Criminal* character and carried it on for almost the rest of his life."

Moving into the '90s, the budgets were getting bigger as was the roll call of celebrity cameos. *Dangerous* was launched with *Black Or White*, a CGI-generated trip around the world followed by a four-minute exercise in ultra-violence during which Michael transformed into a panther which featured Macaulay Culkin. The album's subsequent clips featured Eddie Murphy, Iman and Magic Johnson (*Remember The Time*), Naomi Campbell (*In The Closet*) and Michael Jordan (*Jam*).

Michael returned in 1995 with *Scream*, widely regarded as the most expensive video ever made at \$7 million. A duet with his sister Janet, the *Mark*



Jackson films in a Rio favela for the *They Don't Really Care About Us* video

© Rex Features



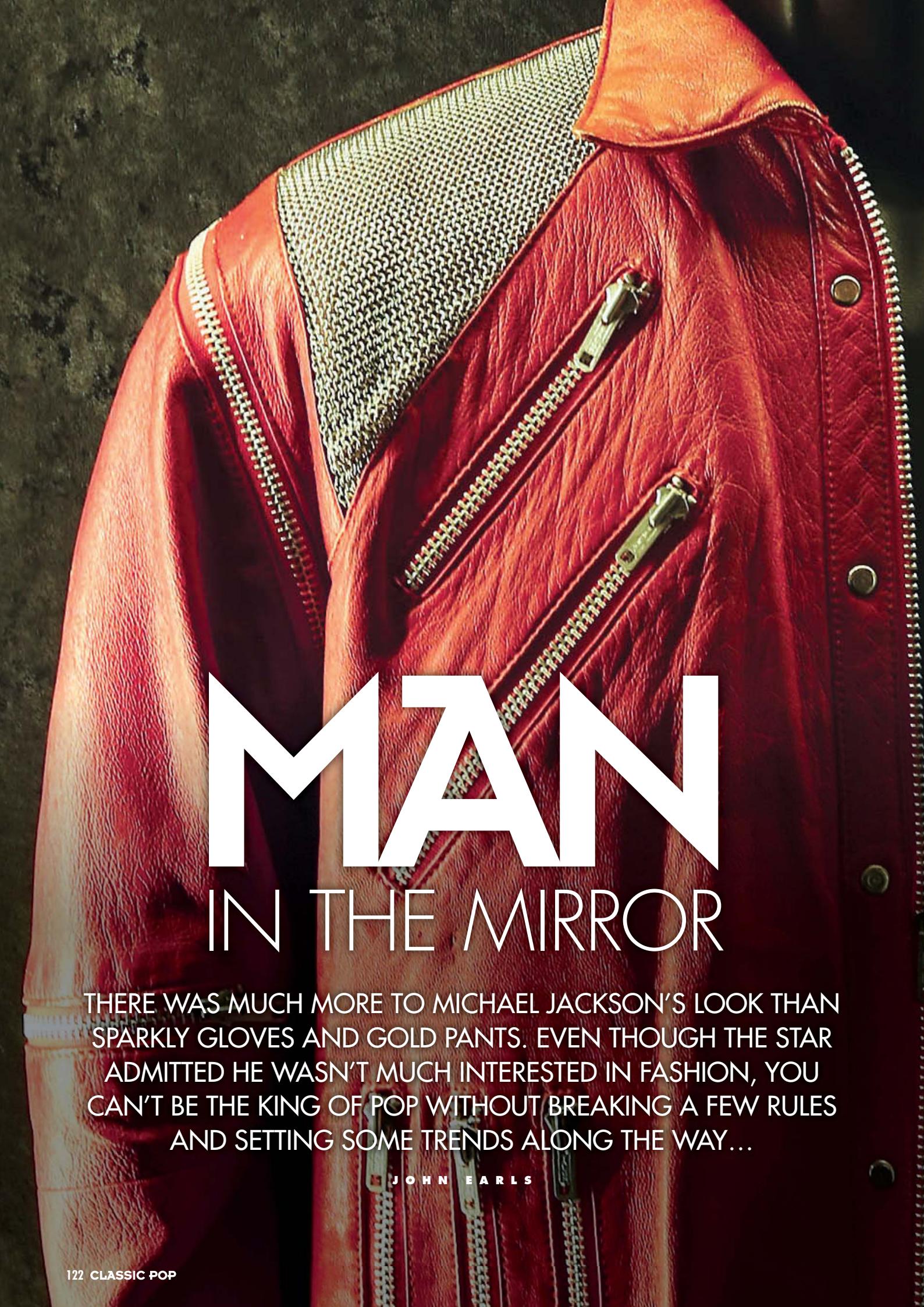
Romanek-directed video was inspired by *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Les Enfants Terribles*, portraying the pair in a spaceship. "The reason that video cost such an obscene amount of money was that the record label came to me too late with a hard release date – I had something like five weeks," says Mark. "They said, 'We've got the two biggest pop stars in the world, brother and sister, Janet and Michael together for the first time.' And Michael was crazy. Everything had to be the biggest, biggest, biggest, biggest, best, best ever in all of history."

Having built up an iconic videography, much of Michael's later output was either memorable for the wrong reasons (*You Are Not Alone*'s ill-judged semi-nude clinch with new bride Lisa Marie Presley) or seemed to be big-budget re-treads of things he had done before. *You Rock My World* and *Blood On The Dancefloor* aimed for *Smooth Criminal* gangster grit; *Earth Song*, with its images of social ills and flattened rainforests, harked back to *Man In The Mirror* and *Heal The World*; the soft rock posturing first seen in *Dirty Diana* was bordering on pastiche after being replicated on *Come Together* and *Give In To Me*. 1997's *Ghosts*, a Stephen King-penned film directed by special effects creator Stan Winston, was an obvious homage to *Thriller* and, lasting 38 minutes, gave Michael a late entry in the record books for being the longest ever music video.

There was one more achievement to go. Following his tragic death on 25th June 2009, it was announced that a film would be released to allow fans to experience the live extravaganza Michael had planned. *This Is It* was released in cinemas in October 2009. Taken from over 100 hours of footage of rehearsals and filming of the video screen element of the show as well as interviews with the band, dancers and tour personnel, the film was both a look at how his visual legacy was referenced and updated for a modern-looking show capable of outdoing any of his rivals, and a heartbreaking reminder of what could have been and the loss of a talent gone too soon. It took over \$260 million at the box office, becoming the highest-grossing documentary of all time. Even posthumously, Michael was breaking records. ■

Michael receiving a Legend Award at the 2006 MTV Video Awards in Tokyo





MAN IN THE MIRROR

THERE WAS MUCH MORE TO MICHAEL JACKSON'S LOOK THAN SPARKLY GLOVES AND GOLD PANTS. EVEN THOUGH THE STAR ADMITTED HE WASN'T MUCH INTERESTED IN FASHION, YOU CAN'T BE THE KING OF POP WITHOUT BREAKING A FEW RULES AND SETTING SOME TRENDS ALONG THE WAY...

JOHN EARLS

ASKED

by Interview around the release of *Thriller* in 1982 whether he was interested in fashion, Michael Jackson responded: "No, but I

care about what I wear on stage. I love just putting on a costume and looking at myself in the mirror – baggy pants or funky shoes, and feeling the character of it."

For a singer who grew up in public, Michael Jackson always felt most at home on stage. In essence, everything he wore was part of a performance... so Jackson always felt the need to dress up. His stylist Michael Bush, who worked with Jackson from 1985 until his death, said: "Yes, I did see Michael wear sneakers. But only to play basketball in." But, if Jackson's look influenced a generation, he wasn't "fashionable" in the strictest sense of the word. Only when he was searching for a particular look for his London comeback concerts in 2009 did Jackson briefly become fascinated by fashion designers. Even then, having asked for sample outfits from John Galliano and Alexander McQueen, Jackson eventually chose relatively unknown designer Zaldy Goco to reinvent his image.

When The Jackson 5 began, young Michael was plainly the star, but that wasn't necessarily down to his image. As with everything in his life at that stage, Michael and his siblings' look was controlled by his father Joe. The band were as colourful and hyperreal as their music, but it wasn't as if Michael was any more vivid than his brothers.

As a footnote, 2010 saw the announcement of a Jackson 5 clothing line, The J5 Collection. But, rather than offer fans the chance to wear the tank tops and bell bottoms of the ABC years, the range seemed geared more towards buying outfits from Michael and his brothers' solo years. Although prices and a range of partners including Urban Outfitters were announced, the planned release date of spring 2011 came and went – and the J5 Collection website has long been a broken link.

Once Michael went solo with *Off The Wall*, his own style began developing in earnest. He was a fan of 1940s Hollywood, especially Clark Gable and Fred Astaire – and his clothing around *Don't Stop Til You Get Enough* was basically a disco-fied version of their classic look. Sparkly dinner jacket with oversize



Motown 25, March 23 1985:
Michael delivers a killer,
career-shifting solo version
of *Billie Jean* complete with
famous white glove





Socks, sparkles and hat were a constant theme: here is MJ at the 1995 MTV Awards



Moonwalk, Jackson wrote: "I told my management 'Please order me a cool fedora, like a secret agent would wear.' I wanted something sinister, a real slouchy hat."

He was particularly pleased to popularise white socks, which quickly became popular among 1980s schoolkids and have slunk back out of fashion ever since. "It was considered extremely square to wear white socks," Jackson said. "They were cool in the 1950s, but you wouldn't be seen dead wearing them in the Sixties or Seventies. But, after *Thriller* came out, it even became OK to wear your pants high around your ankles again."

During the Motown 25 performance of *Billie Jean*, Jackson ditched the fedora early on, but the image with the fedora and the white glove perhaps the most famous of his career. As additions to his regular outfit go, the fedora and glove were relatively simple; by the time of *Bad*, Jackson was starting to look like a branch of Clare's Accessories had fallen on top of him. He'd switched from working with his regular designer Bill Whitten to the duo of Michael Bush and Dennis Tompkins.

Originally a shirt designer for Neil Diamond, Whitten began working with The Jacksons in the late '70s before graduating

"IT WAS CONSIDERED EXTREMELY SQUARE TO WEAR WHITE SOCKS. YOU WOULDN'T BE SEEN DEAD WEARING THEM IN THE SIXTIES OR SEVENTIES" – MJ

bow tie? No problem. Nobody would have been at all surprised to see Jackson wear Astaire-style tap shoes with an added goldfish in the sole.

Thriller generally saw Jackson dress like a pupil at the high school prom, all leather jacket and initialled sweaters. But the famous *Thriller* red leather jacket was red for a very canny reason. In his 2012 book *The King Of Style* on Jackson's fashion, stylist Bush said: "The colour red dilates the pupils when you look at it. Michael wore red to help burn forever the memory of what fans were seeing." It helped that Jackson was one of the few people capable of wearing a red leather jacket and getting away with it.

The other trademark look from *Thriller* came when Jackson debuted the moonwalk at the Motown 25 concert. Along with his regular high-water short black trousers, white socks and shiny jacket (which was apparently borrowed from Jackson's mother Katherine), Jackson added a fedora and a white glove. The fedora was another tribute to 1940s Hollywood, this time its spy films. In his autobiography

to overseeing Michael's looks for *Off The Wall* and *Thriller*. He also worked with Elton John, The Commodores and Richard Pryor. "Singers didn't have one place they could go to be outfitted," explained Whitten. "I was the one source for them."

As former theatre designers, Bush and Tompkins used their pedigree in working with actors to bring even more flamboyance to Jackson's image. Bush told Jackson fansite Michael And The Truth: "Michael's clothes were always designed to be on show, as he was the ultimate showman. Michael taught me that need to think about always being on show when you were designing, which worked well."

Although presumably less physically memorable on the eyes, they simplified Jackson's leather jacket for the *Bad* sleeve to a simple black one; a plain colour made it easier to add on the endless belts and buckles for the title track's video. Bush insisted the accessories were bought at an LA high-street department store.



The 18-carat gold spandex robot outfit used on the HIStory tour

The tour for *Bad* brought out the best in the new partnership, as Bush acknowledged in an interview with Jackson fansite MJ World in 2012. "The tour costumes were always my favourite clothes to design for Michael," said Bush. "The jacket he wore that changed colours for *Thriller* was always one of my favourites. If you asked Michael which were his favourites, he'd always reply that it was the ones he wore for the opening sections of his tours. They were usually the most intricate, over the top and highly designed."

As for Jackson's videos, Bush and Tompkins kept ramping up the accessories. There was the eye-catching arm cast for *Black Or White*, supposedly to protect a broken wrist (though it's generally assumed now Jackson's wrist was perfectly fine and the cast was a fashion choice). Then came Jackson's closest flirtation with a bondage look with his and Janet's matching spiked tops for their *Scream* duet. Surely the peak of Jackson's theatricality in playing with his image came with the 50ft statues of himself to promote *HIStory* in 1995; by that stage, having worn militaristic statement jackets for the *Thriller* era, Jackson was more akin to acting and dressing like a dictator.

However much Jackson was misunderstood in private, publicly he'd never seemed more remote and inaccessible – yet even at this time, one of Jackson's favourite costumes was the gold robotic outfit he wore in which he did a combination of the moonwalk and robot dance during *Stranger In Moscow*. Far

"MICHAEL'S FAVOURITE CLOTHES WERE THE ONES HE WORE FOR OPENING SECTIONS. THEY WERE THE MOST INTRICATE AND HIGHLY DESIGNED"

from being a Terminator-style all-powerful android, Jackson's *Stranger In Moscow* robot looked almost vulnerable, matching the song's tender sentiments.

The robot outfit was made from 18-carat gold-plated spandex. Bush explained to Michael And The Truth: "Michael had to look like he was wearing metal, but still be able to move and dance." Such practical considerations naturally affected Tompkins and Bush's costume choices; Jackson would sweat away 5lbs during a concert. Bush, who summarised Jackson's style as "rebellious street fashion",

explained: "Michael would lose water weight during his performances, so we had to have various sizes of costume for him to change into." To ensure Jackson had maximum flexibility, that meant a lot of spandex.

After the court proceedings in 2005, Jackson began by his standards to dress down in his rare public appearances, with recognised high-end fashion designers' outfits. Ultimately, this led to Michael Bush sharing designer duties with newcomer Zaldy Goco for what would have been Jackson's final shows for the *This Is It* concerts in London in 2009. Goco only began working with Jackson in April, with the shows scheduled for July. Goco's brief was to "reinvent" Jackson, but the designer told Business Of Fashion: "My first thought was that Michael didn't need to be reinvented, especially for those shows. He's one of the only artists to create iconic images to go along with iconic songs. Nobody wants to see a *Thriller* jacket that isn't red and black."



This iridescent silver jacket was used on the Dangerous tour

Goco wanted to keep Jackson's iconoclasm, but update it. He added technology, teaming up with Philips to create an illuminated lightshow outfit for *Billie Jean*. "That really made Michael the happiest," Goco enthused. Other looks would have included a Samurai leather jacket for *Black Or White* and a *We Are The World* jacket featuring embroidery designs from around the globe. "Michael was super in-tune to all the details," said Goco. "Every time I met with him, he was always catching little details. When I'd do fittings with him, he was very solid and strong. He was lively and energetic."

It's hard to write about Jackson's changing fashion sense without acknowledging how much his body changed over time too. The vitiligo condition which whitened his skin has been well documented, but its impact on someone who was proud to have done so much to break down boundaries for black musicians has perhaps been underestimated. And Jackson was someone who admitted he was never satisfied, either with his appearance or his work. That restlessness makes his plastic surgery both understandable and heartbreaking. As Jackson told Capital Radio in 1980 about his quest for perfection: "I'm never satisfied with anything, because I do believe deeply in perfection. If you're satisfied with everything, you're just going to stay at one level and the world will move ahead. That's not good either."

Perhaps it's best to appreciate that, at the end of his life, Jackson was still excited about how to present himself to the public. His final fitting with Zaldy Goco for the London O2 shows was just six days before his death. "I tried the *Billie Jean* pants on him and he was silent – completely stunned," Goco recalled. "After 30 seconds, he said 'It's everything I've always wanted.'" Not perfection, of course. But close enough. ■

THE LADY AND THE KING

Following Michael Jackson's death, many of his tour outfits were bought by Lady Gaga. There was a certain symmetry – Gaga worked on a duet with Jackson, *Picture*, which was scheduled to have opened the *This Is It* shows, and Jackson's designer Zaldy Goco went on to work with Gaga. Most of all, Gaga recognised that Jackson was most concerned with how he dressed for his concerts.

In total, Gaga bought 55 of Jackson's costumes at a 2012 auction. Explaining her spree, she told Ellen DeGeneres on her chatshow: "Some people might think that the favourite clothes I wear are ones for award shows, but it's the ones I wear every night for my fans. I imagine Michael felt the same way, because I believe fans' energy gets stuck in my clothes. I really wanted to preserve that energy for him. The thought of a bunch of rich people each buying one piece made me crazy."

Gaga also bought items including a *Thriller* jacket, a *Billie Jean* outfit and a glove.

"A couple of pieces spoke to me," Gaga said. "There's a sweater with 'MJ' on and a jacket with 'Stop the filthy tabloid press' on the back. If I'm in the studio or feeling down, I'll wear them. I think Michael would have been OK with that."

THE LOOK OF GLOVE

The idea of wearing a single white glove was one which began simply. Making its debut for the *Billie Jean* performance at Motown 25 in 1983, Jackson's original single white glove was a store-bought one which his designer Bill Whitten covered with rhinestones. In his *Moonwalk* autobiography, Jackson claimed he'd had the idea for some time. "I'd been wearing the single glove for years before *Thriller*," he wrote. "One glove was cool. Wearing two gloves seemed so ordinary, but a single glove was different."

Whitten explained there was a practical performance aspect to the sparkling glove, too. "The audience were missing Michael's hand and feet movements," Whitten told the *Los Angeles Times* in 1990. "They couldn't see his quick gestures."

Jackson and Whitten began building the glove into the singer's ultimate accessory. Working with LA bead specialists Artistic Hand Beading, 1,200 Austrian crystals were hand-sewn over 10 days on to the military glove designed by Whitten and Jackson.

Eight months after Motown 25, the single glove became indelibly associated with Jackson. When his hair caught fire filming his Pepsi ad, Jackson was photographed waving to reporters with his gloved hand as he was carried into an ambulance. However unwittingly, even in trauma Jackson knew how to showcase an accessory.



Michael's fedora and glove backstage during the HIStory world tour, 1997

THE KING OF POP IN HIS OWN WORDS

MICHAEL JACKSON RARELY GAVE INTERVIEWS BUT, WHEN HE DID, HE ALWAYS HAD SOMETHING WORTH SAYING. BEHIND THE RUMOURS, HERE'S WHAT HE REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT LIFE...

JOHN EARLS

"That Blondie song Rapture was originally done by a black artist, but it didn't cross over. She does it and it becomes a big hit. I don't resent that, but I wish it was more equal." On racial inequality in music, 1980

"I had great times with my brothers, pillow fights and things, but I used to cry from loneliness... there was a park across the street from the studio where I'd see children playing, and I'd cry because I had to work instead." On child stardom

"THE KIDS WHO LIVE IN THE GHETTOS AND INNER CITIES JUST HAVE A NATURAL TALENT FOR DANCING. THEY COME UP WITH THE DANCES. ALL I DID WAS ENHANCE THE DANCE." ON CREATING HIS DANCE MOVES

"Today, a writer will have success and then just celebrate it for the rest of his life and forget about writing ever again. There's no self-control, he's partying the rest of his life. Back then, people just kept trying and kept coming up with great stuff." On why the '60s was his favourite decade for music, 1982

"We were fresh, new and different and I don't think there was anything else like that out there."
On the reasons for The Jackson 5's success

"I WAS LAYING IN BED WITH A COVER ON AND EVERYTHING, DOING THAT RAP THING IN THE DARK." ON RECORDING THE SPOKEN-WORD INTRO TO I JUST CAN'T STOP LOVING YOU

"I don't like to take a step backwards, but it's a whole other economy now. That's no excuse, though." Fearing that *Thriller* wouldn't sell as well as *Off The Wall*, to *Smash Hits*, 1982

"How can he think that way to come up with that joke? He just cracks me up, he's a genius." On his unlikely love of Benny Hill

"I always want to do music that inspires or influences another generation. You want what you create to live. Michelangelo said 'I know the creator will go, but his work survives. To escape death, I bind my soul to my work.' And that's how I feel. I give my all to my work. I want it to live." In his final in-depth interview, with *Ebony* magazine, 2007

"I'm proud to be a black American. I have a skin disorder that destroys the pigmentation of the skin. It's something I cannot control. It's on my father's side of the family and it makes me very sad. But what about the millions of people who sit in the sun to become darker? No-one says anything about that." On the skin disorder vitiligo that made Jackson appear to be white

"You have to be able to hum it, from the farmer in Ireland to the lady who scrubs toilets in Harlem." On the formula for a good song

"BACKSTAGE, A CHILD WITH A LITTLE TUXEDO ON ASKED ME 'WHO TAUGHT YOU TO MOVE LIKE THAT?' AND I SAID 'I GUESS GOD... AND REHEARSAL.'" ON HIS FAMED PERFORMANCE AT MOTOWN 25 WHERE HE DEBUTED THE MOONWALK

"I have an album coming out for the Millennium which I'm halfway through. It's going to be the best thing I've ever done. I'm putting my heart and soul into it, because I'm not sure if I'm going to do another one after this. This will be my last album, I think." Talking up what would become *Invincible*, 1999

"The key to being a wonderful writer is not to write. You just get out of the way and leave room for God to walk into the room. When I write something I know is right, I get on my knees and say 'Thank you, Jehovah!'" On his songwriting process

"MTV said they don't play black artists. It broke my heart but, at the same time, it lit something. I said to myself 'I have to do something they can't ignore.' So, yeah, Billie Jean. And when MTV played it, it set the all-time record. Then Prince came, and it opened the door for Prince and all the other black artists." On breaking down racial barriers

"I DON'T FOLLOW THAT STUFF. WE DON'T LOOK TO MAN TO FIX THE PROBLEMS OF THE WORLD." ON POLITICS

"People don't look at themselves honestly. They don't point the finger at themselves, it's always the other guy's fault. But you should change yourself and make better of yourself." On the inspiration behind *Man In The Mirror*

"There should be some boundaries. The star needs some space, some time to relax. He has a heart. He's human." On press intrusion

"As long as people enjoy it, I'll always be happy. Don't Stop Til You Get Enough? I never want to stop." Touring Off The Wall in 1980

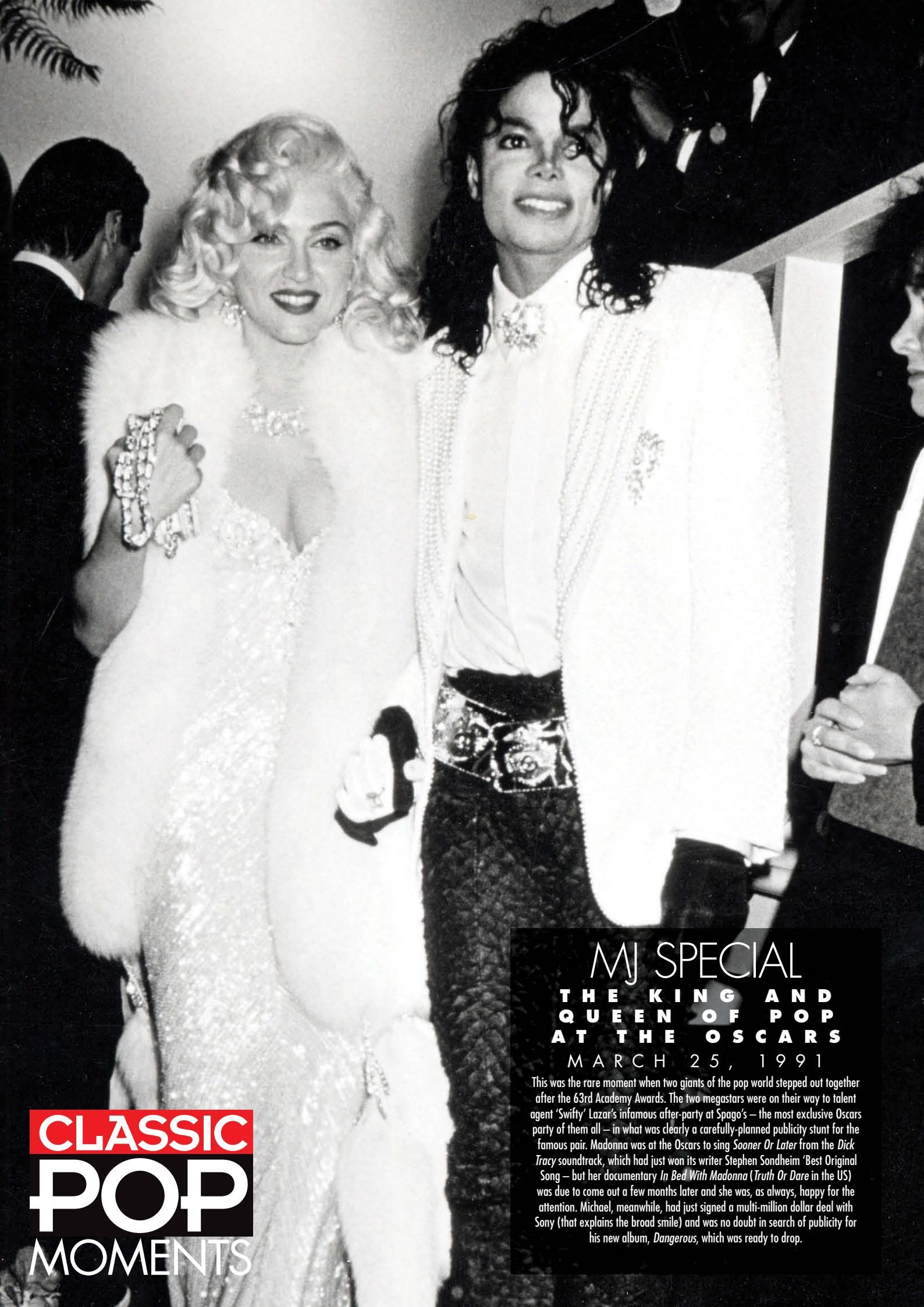
"MY FATHER WOULD REHEARSE US WITH A BELT IN HIS HAND. YOU COULDN'T MESS UP. HE WAS A GENIUS WITH THE WAY HE TAUGHT US STAGING AND HOW TO WORK AN AUDIENCE." ON HIS FATHER JOE'S STRICT METHODS FOR THE JACKSON 5'S PERFORMANCES

"YOU SHOULDN'T SAY 'HE'S JACKO'. I'M NOT JACKO. I'M A JACKSON." ON HIS "NOT NICE" NICKNAME

"I wanted to do an album that was like Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite. So that, in a thousand years from now, people would still be listening to it. I'd like to see people, hundreds and hundreds of years from now, still pulling out songs from that album and dissecting it. I want it to live." On recording the *Dangerous* album

"Bela Lugosi and Peter Lorre are dead. Who's the king of horror who's still alive? The only giant who goes back to those days is Vincent Price. But Rod Temperton and Quincy actually thought of him, because he's a friend." On getting Vincent Price to do the voiceover on *Thriller*'s title track

"I MOSTLY LIKE THE OLDER GUYS WHO AREN'T HERE ANYMORE, LIKE JM BARRIE. THEIR IMAGINATION WAS OUT OF THIS WORLD." ON HIS LOVE OF BOOKS



CLASSIC POP MOMENTS

MJ SPECIAL THE KING AND QUEEN OF POP AT THE OSCARS

MARCH 25, 1991

This was the rare moment when two giants of the pop world stepped out together after the 63rd Academy Awards. The two megastars were on their way to talent agent 'Swifty' Lazar's infamous after-party at Spago's – the most exclusive Oscars party of them all – in what was clearly a carefully-planned publicity stunt for the famous pair. Madonna was at the Oscars to sing *Sooner Or Later* from the *Dick Tracy* soundtrack, which had just won its writer Stephen Sondheim 'Best Original Song' – but her documentary *In Bed With Madonna (Truth Or Dare in the US)* was due to come out a few months later and she was, as always, happy for the attention. Michael, meanwhile, had just signed a multi-million dollar deal with Sony (that explains the broad smile) and was no doubt in search of publicity for his new album, *Dangerous*, which was ready to drop.



